



# ALSOP HIGH SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy - Students

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### **1. Aims**

Our school is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievements for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at Alsop, it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. All students should strive towards a goal of 100% attendance. We rely on the support of parents and carers to send their child to school every day, on time, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child is educated and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Our school, in line with the local authority, Omega Trust and the Government, considers 97% or higher to be good attendance. We aim to act early to address patterns of absence and support parents in their legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Any parent needing support to ensure their child attends should contact the school as soon as the concern arises.

To meet our obligations with regards to school attendance we:

- Promote good attendance and work tirelessly to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

The Government has set a minimum target of 97% attendance that all students must achieve during the academic year. At Alsop High School, we place a lot of emphasis on ensuring all students meet this target. The reason for this is because there is evidence which supports the theory that attendance and attainment are linked. We encourage all students to aim for excellent levels of attendance to support academic progress across the curriculum.

## **2. Guiding Principles**

- It is the responsibility of everyone at Alsop to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Alsop needs to ensure that all its students access a full time education, which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential. Part time timetable are only used in exceptional circumstances and are time sensitive.
- Alsop will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Alsop will work with students and their families to ensure every student has good attendance and punctuality.
- Alsop will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Alsop has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- Alsop will continue to develop ICT based attendance tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.
- Alsop will support all aspects of legislation by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- Alsop will have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

## **3. What you can expect from Alsop High School:**

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and /or unjustified absence
- We will work closely with parents/carers where student's absence is cause for concern
- We will support students to achieve good attendance and punctuality
- We will support students returning to school after prolonged absence

## **4. What Alsop High School expects from Students:**

- To attend regularly and on time
- To be punctual to all lessons
- To ensure that they register for all sessions/timetabled lessons and inform the attendance office if they are not able to be registered
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are given to the appropriate person or taken to the attendance office

## **5. What Alsop High School expects from Parents/Carers:**

- To ensure their child attends Alsop High School on those days it is open, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.

- To ensure their child attends every day the school is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from school for any reason other than illness or other authorised reason.
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- To immediately inform the school reception / attendance office if their child is unable to attend including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the school on each day of absence.

## **6. Registration**

- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day - at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session.
- Students are expected to arrive early in order to be ready for the start of the first lesson.
- Students are registered at the start of every lesson of the day.
- Registers close at in the morning at 9:00am and in the afternoon half an hour after the start of period 4 (this will be determined by the lunch time for each year group) after which students will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 2).
- Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'Advice on School Attendance' published 2012 by the DfE.
- Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made

## **7. Unplanned Absence**

- Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible.
- Parents may notify the school of an unplanned absence by calling 0151 235 1200 and selecting option 1. Parents may speak to a member of the attendance team or leave a recorded message on the school's answer service.
- Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

## **8. Medical or Dental Appointments**

- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.
- However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Parents may notify the school of a medical or dental appointment during school hours by calling 0151 235 1200 and selecting option 1. Parents may speak to a member of the attendance team or leave a recorded message on the school's answer service. Parents may

also provide written notification of an appointment addressed to their child's Form Tutor or Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year. Parents may also inform the attendance office in person by visiting the school attendance office during school hours.<sup>5</sup>

- Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section

## 9. Punctuality

- We expect students to arrive punctually (on the school site by 8:20am and at Line Up at 8:25)
- Registres will be taken in PDR rooms. Students arriving after the register has been completed will be deemed late.
- All students should arrive via the student entrance in Walton Village
- Any student arriving after this time should sign in at student reception where the attendance office is located, giving their reason for being late. This will be logged and if a student arrives late for a second time in a week a punctuality detention will be issued
- If parents are aware that their child is going to present themselves to school late, they should contact the attendance office as soon as possible by calling 0151 235 1200 and selecting option 1.
- Repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers.

## 10. Following Up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

## 11. Reporting to Parents

Parents are notified of their child's attendance half termly and as part of their progress reports.

## 12. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Granting approval for term-time absence:

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Before deciding whether to authorise leave of absence, the headteacher will consider

- the impact for the student's academic progress of any absence
- the pupils attendance over the academic year
- whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for 'exceptional circumstances' and an authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Bereavement/ funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling – the headteacher should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- A serious illness of a close relative
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence
- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however, we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Unauthorised absence include:

- Shopping days
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments
- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Persistent lateness due to taking a younger sibling to school. The school takes the view that it is the parents responsibility to ensure all of their children attend school regularly and on time.

Examples of unauthorised absence will not be approved.

Where the school identifies patterns of unauthorised absence in a child's attendance, the school will initiate contact through meetings, letters, telephone calls, emails, home visits, etc, via the attendance officer, in order to discuss attendance and how to support and improve overall attendance to school.

Study leave – study leave is not granted by default and is only granted to pupils in year 11. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise in school.

Flexi-schooling requests – flexi-schooling is a way in which children can attend school part-time – legally. This should only be used in extenuating circumstances as part of a structured intervention programme that is time is time sensitive. Any request for this arrangement must be made by the child's parent AND be agreed by the Headteacher.

### **13. Legal Sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

#### **14. How Alsop High School respond to Absence/Lateness**

- If a student is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the school will contact parents/carers either by phone or using our text messaging service. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence. Contact will usually be via automated message (where available) which will attempt to call/text landline numbers and mobile numbers for priority 1 and 2 contact numbers. Parents/carers are able to respond directly upon receiving this call. Alternatively, where a message has been left by the automated service, a parent should contact the attendance office / reception to inform us of the reason for their child's absence. The school asks that parents/carers ensure we have the most up to contact details at all times.
- If no response is received to the automated service, the school will contact (phone or letter) to parents/carers requesting an explanation.
- All absence notes will be retained.
- Where a student's absence falls below the target of 97% they will be placed on the graduated monitoring of student attendance.

#### **15. Persistent Absence (PA)**

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee (PA) when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any student whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention.

Intervention may be via:

- an action plan to improve attendance which may involve a PSP and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant academy staff and parents/carers
- where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the school further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the Local Authority via the school census on a termly and annual basis.

#### **16. Serious Absence (SA)**

A student becomes a Serious Absentee (SA) when their attendance falls below 50% across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing serious damage to any child's educational prospects and social and emotional well being.

Any student whose attendance has reached the SA level will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who will work with parents and carers to reintegrate the child back into school life. Where a child continues to be absent from school legal proceedings may be implemented

### **17. Leave of Absence during Term time**

Any absence interrupts the continuity of student's learning. Government Legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence, please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take students out of school for holidays during term time. Even where the circumstances are considered exceptional, please be aware that:

- Your request will not be authorised during exam periods (these could be throughout the year).
- Your request will not be authorised during the month of September.
- Your request will not be authorised for any student in Year 11.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child's attendance is below the 97% target unless there have been legitimate reasons for a child's absence previously
- Your request will not be authorised if your child has unauthorised absences.
- Your request will not be authorised where a previous holiday has been taken.
- Your request will not be authorised where there are coursework deadlines or controlled assessments (these could be throughout the year).

It is expected that a request form is submitted to the attendance office at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the request form.

The school has the right to refer to the local authority requesting they serve a penalty notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation. Penalties require each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days (with effect from September 2013). Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any student taking leave of absence without prior notification to the school; in this situation, a retrospective holiday form needs to be completed and the letter amended appropriately.

### **18. Re-integration following Long Term Absence**

Where a student has been absent for a prolonged (2 weeks) period of time, perhaps due to illness, the school will:

- PSM, with support from Attendance Officer, to visit the home at a mutually convenient time to address any concerns or anxieties regarding returning to school
- welcome the student back to the school and value their return
- provide support for the student in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the school
- ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances
- work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome
- consider a personalised programme of return if appropriate



- monitor and review the student's return

### **19. Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

It is the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all students

- Students are informed on a weekly basis of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve
- Where appropriate, students whose attendance falls below the target they will be assigned a member of staff who will support them and monitor their attendance
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded
- Students, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school attendance office at any time to discuss their child's attendance
- Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Students who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the academy
- Effective links are made with primary schools to facilitate the smooth transition to Alsop High School
- Students' attendance will be reported

### **20. Attendance Data and Targets**

The target for all students is to strive for 100% attendance. Only by achieving full attendance can students expect to achieve their full potential

Attendance data will be collected and analysed and used to inform the school's attendance practices and interventions

Individual student data will be analysed and monitored to enable early intervention

Attendance data is provided on a termly basis to the Trust

Attendance data and persistent absence data is communicated to the Local Authority

The Attendance Manager will monitor attendance on a weekly basis

### **21. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance

([/www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance)) from the Department for Education

(DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility

measures ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance))

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1076127/School\\_attendance\\_guidance\\_May-2022\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1076127/School_attendance_guidance_May-2022_.pdf)
- <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/voices-of-englands-missing-children/>

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las)), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **22. Children Missing in Education (CME)**

- All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.
- Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.
- Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory age are safe and receiving suitable education. Local authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.
- At Alsop High School we follow Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for local authorities September 2016 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

## **23. Roles and Responsibilities**

### *The Trust*

The Trust is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher and senior leader for attendance to account for the implementation of this policy.

### *The Headteacher*

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and holding the senior leader and leader for attendance to account. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed penalty notices, where necessary.

### *Senior Leader for Attendance*

The senior leader for attendance is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Head, SLT and Trust. The senior leader for attendance also support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and liaise with relevant personnel to ensure that policies are consistently adhered to and provide leadership to this area.

### *The Attendance Manager*

The attendance manager is responsible for:

- Reporting attendance on a daily and weekly basis to the senior leader for attendance.
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Managers the attendance officers daily work schedule
- Lead the attendance ITAS Meetings for all year groups
- To provide all stakeholders with the relevant attendance data
- Tracks all home visits
- Ensures the attendance trackers are up to date
- Reports concerns about attendance to relevant HOY/Senior Leader
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Works with specific cohort of students as part of the whole school graduated response to student absence
- To liaise with external agencies to provide bespoke support for students who are PA and SA
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### *The Attendance Officer*

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Chasing up reasons for absence with specific year groups
- To liaise closely with HOY/AHOY with regards to students in their year group
- To carry out home visits
- To attend specific year group ITAS meetings
- Works with specific cohorts of students as part of the whole school graduated response to student absence
- Initiates specific interventions for students who struggle to attend school on a regular basis
- Completes the paperwork for referrals to the educational welfare officer service including referrals for fixed penalty notices and managed moves.
- Maintains the attendance tracker for their year group.

### *The Attendance Administrator*

The Attendance Administrator is responsible for:

- Making daily phone calls following up absences
- Ensuring registers are completed
- Ensure staff are using correct codes for absence
- Ensuring attendance letters are sent out once trigger is met
- Support the attendance manager and officers to promote and monitor attendance

### *Senior Line Manager*

The SLT link is responsible for:

- Discuss the attendance of the year group with HOY during line management meetings
- Ensure the attendance policy is being implemented fully by the Year Team
- Work with a specific cohort of students as part of the whole school graduated response to student absence
- Contribute to the SLT attendance discussions

### *Head of Year*

The Head of Year is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance of their year group
- Discuss attendance during assemblies
- Ensure attendance information is shared with students via PDR
- Work with a specific cohort of students as part of the whole school graduated response to student absence
- Attend the attendance ITAS meeting and feedback to tutors
- Regularly reward good attendance during rewards assemblies

#### *Assistant Head of Year*

The Assistant Head of Year is responsible for:

- Monitoring punctuality of their year group
- Ensure punctuality information is shared with students via PDR
- Work with a specific cohort of students as part of the whole school graduated response to student absence

#### *Form Tutors*

Form tutors are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Positively promote all attendance initiatives with students in their tutor group

#### *Class Teacher*

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Welcoming and valuing the attendance of all students to lessons
- Ensuring all students are accurately registered
- Ensuring that students know the register is being taken
- Identify student absence to lessons and take appropriate action
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff

#### *Office Staff*

Office staff are responsible for:

- Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.