



Alsager School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Prepared by Mr Rob Pearce
Assistant Headteacher
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Presented for approval
at the Full Governing Body meeting
of Alsager School
on 30/11/22 and subsequently approved and adopted on
the same date.

Chair of Governors:
Mr Lindsay Purcell

Signature:

Date: 30/11/22

Review date: To be reviewed in light of operation experience
and /or changes in legislation

PRINCIPLES

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority. Please see further guidance on the Cheshire East website.

Any child or family can go through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school and the parents at the earliest possible stage. **If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up the real reason for their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.** This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and will often make things worse.

Every half-day absence (1 session) from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness.

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. However, 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.

Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- *keeping children off school without a good reason*
- *truancy from a whole session*
- *absences which have never been properly explained*
- *children who arrive at school too late to get a mark*
- *taking holidays in term times*

Parents are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may issue parents with a letter that details the concerns of the school or may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

PROCEDURES

Registers

Our school day has two sessions. Period 1 also counts as AM registration and afternoon form time counts as PM registration.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding and our whole school 'Behaviour for Learning' system, the register is taken every lesson by every teacher. Any students who are missing from a lesson who have been present in previous lessons are identified by the class teacher and a message is sent to our Attendance Officer to investigate.

Punctuality

Period 1 which is also our legal registration starts at 8.40am. All students should be at their classroom ready to learn at this time. Students who arrive at school after this time will be recorded as late and issued with a 'same day break time detention' for a third offence or a lunch time detention for any subsequent lateness in that half term. The Attendance Officer will determine whether the lateness is authorised. Any student arriving after 9.10am will no longer be recorded as L (late) but will be recorded as a U (Late after the register has closed). All students who arrive late to school for the AM session will receive a text home informing parents. Students in KS4 will have their privilege to leave site at lunch time removed for that day. This will be increased to a week on their third late in a half term. KS4 students who are late to return to site for the PM session will have their privilege to leave site removed for the following day and serve a lunch time detention. A third late will result in this privilege being removed for a week. Students will also attend meetings with the SLT link for attendance, their Head of College or the attendance officer to discuss reasons for lateness and to make plans to improve.

Notification of absence

Parents are required to phone or e-mail the school to notify the school of absence due to illness by 9.00am each day. **Contact will need to be made for each day of absence** unless an agreement has been made with our Attendance Officer.

Absence Line: 01270 871107 or absence@alsagerschool.org

First Day Calling

The parents of absent students are telephoned from 9.30am when no contact has been made to explain the absence of their child. For safeguarding reasons it is important that we as a school address any absent students and speak to parents about this.

Authorised leave may be granted in an emergency or for genuine pastoral reasons (e.g. after the death of a close relative). Parents are encouraged to provide a written note explaining the absence in advance and the school will determine whether the absence is to be authorised or not.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, the Attendance officer should be informed in advance. A “present” mark can only be awarded for the morning session if a child is in attendance between 8.40 and 9.10. It is imperative that students do not miss this slot of 8.40-9.10. The register for the afternoon session takes place between 1.05-1.35 and students can only be marked present for the afternoon session if they are in attendance at that time. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. We always expect students to attend school before and after appointments.

Holidays

In April 2012, the Government accepted Charlie Taylor’s recommendation to challenge the culture of the expectation term time holiday and set out a clear expectation that term time holiday leave should only be granted in ‘exceptional circumstances’.

Protocol to be followed:

If, despite the law, a parent wishes to write to take their child/children out of school for a holiday they must write to the Headteacher detailing the exceptional reasons for doing so. We recommend that this is done well in advance of booking a holiday. **With the achievement of our pupils of paramount importance and the regulations clear we will be extremely unlikely to authorise any holiday leave.** The school will refer parents who have taken unauthorised holidays in term time to the Attendance and Children out of School Team for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Rewarding Attendance

We celebrate students termly who achieve 100% attendance by awarding an ‘Attendance Star’ as it is testimony to their dedication and to the families who support them. We also celebrate 100% attendance each month through a certificate awarded by a student’s Head of College. This gives everyone a chance to be regularly recognised for their achievement. Texts to parents are also sent halfway through the month with the aim of encouraging 100% attendance for that month. Form classes are celebrated for their attendance and information is displayed around the school. All school reports include attendance information as well as authorised and unauthorised absences.

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL?

The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 it is the duty of the parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that they attend school regularly.

In line with the Department For Education guidance, all students who have attendance below 90% are defined as '**Persistent Absentees**'; this equates to 19 days of missed school per year. The school and potentially the 'Attendance and Children out of School Team' will intervene with these students and contact with parents will be made. It is pertinent to point out that in an effort to address poor attendance and unauthorised absence the local authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty fine and/or prosecute parents under the Education Act 1996.

Parents or pupils may wish to contact the Attendance and Children out of School Team to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01270 375255.

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures statutory guidance](#). 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

PROCEDURES FOR PENALTY NOTICE OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

When a pupil reaches 6 unauthorised sessions, (a session is half a day) within a term or two consecutive half terms the school will send a letter to inform you that they are concerned about the number of absences your child has had. An offer of support will be made to

overcome any barriers that might be in place. If unauthorised absences continue to occur, up to or exceeding 10 sessions and parents or pupils are not engaging with the support put in place then the school will contact the Local Authority. You will receive a letter from the school advising you that a referral to the Local Authority has been made and that a penalty notice may be issued. A penalty notice warning letter sent from the Local Authority will give you 15 days in which to improve the child’s attendance. If there is no improvement or the improvement is not sustained, you may be sent a school absence penalty notice accompanied by an explanatory letter-the notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted in the criminal courts.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child= £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per parent=£240 per parent
After 28 days	Parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child’s regular attendance. You could get a criminal record and fined up to £1,000.	Parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child’s regular attendance. You could get a criminal record and fined up to £1,000.

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of “persistent absentees” by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Attendance Officer – Kate Greenwood
absence@alsagerschool.org Tel: 01270 871107

Assistant Headteacher – Rob Pearce r.pearce@alsagerschool.org

For any concerns or worries that may impact a student’s attendance please contact your child’s Head of College

Royce College

v.monaghan@alsagerschool.org

Dod College

t.woods@alsagerschool.org

Moreton College	j.broad@alsagerschool.org
Lovell College	g.potts@alsagerschool.org
6 th form	c.pass@alsagerschool.org

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Please work with us.

This policy will be made available on the school web site.
