

Attendance policy

Alcester Grammar School



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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The current designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Principal, Rachel Thorpe and can be contacted via r.thorpe@alcestegs.com. The Principal is specifically supported by the Year 7-11 Deputy Pastoral Lead.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Johanna Cope-Johnson - j.cope-johnson@alcestergs.com.

3.5 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

3.6 School support staff

School support staff will:

- Take reports from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer emails and calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer/relevant Head of Year/Pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Actively promote full time attendance
- Make sure their child attends every day and timetabled session on time

- Use school systems to report their child's absence before 08:50 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Avoid booking holidays or similar in term time

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 and will be kept open until 09:20
The register for the second session will be taken in lesson 4.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:50 or as soon as practically possible by using the methods outlined [here](#) on the school website

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Parents must apply using one of the methods outlined [here](#) on the school website.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

- A pupil who arrives after 8.50 am is considered to be late. After 8.50 am, all entrances to the school will be closed with the exception of the Main Entrance Via Reception. With the exception of Late Buses, pupils arriving after 8.50 am will be given a negative House Point, with a range of appropriate sanctions applied for students who receive multiple negative points for this reason.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call or email the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Attendance data can be viewed by parents in SatchelOne

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible [here](#) on the school website

The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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
- Study Leave during public examinations

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of un-authorised 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 or withdraw the notice.

From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period. If you get a second fine in 3 years, it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school. If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

AGS promotes good attendance through assemblies, celebration and awards. Pupils and parents are regularly made aware through a range of communication strategies about the importance of good attendance. Mr Walker, Mrs Cope-Johnson and Mrs Powell (Deputy Pastoral Lead 7-11) work in particular to promote the culture school-wide and also with specific families where pupils find attendance more challenging.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance data is monitored half-termly by SLT - and more frequently by the attendance officer and Deputy Pastoral Lead for pupils with known concerns. The data is analysed by pupil, class, year group and all potential cohort groups - for example (but not limited to) those pupils with SEND, in receipt of PP, from different ethnic backgrounds etc. This allows AGS to spot and identify trends and take appropriate action.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data at least half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to SLT and Heads of Year, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Contact parents and carers regularly where attendance is a concern
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide additional support through the Deputy Pastoral Lead
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually, by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- [Child protection and safeguarding policy](#)
- [Behaviour Policy](#)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

Classed as Attendance	
/\	Present at the school (AM/ PM)
L	Late arrival before the register has closed.
K	Attending educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	School Trip Organised and supervised by School Staff
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity
W	Work Experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual Registered at another school.
Authorised absence	
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Part- Time Timetable (Legal change to timetable, must be agreed with parents)
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
M	Medical/ Dental Appointment
J1	Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
S	Study Leave

X	Non Compulsory School Age pupil not required to attend school.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes (mobile child of no fixed abode)
R	Religious Observance
I	Illness
E	Suspended/ Excluded with no alternative provisions made
Absent: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	
Q	Lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not available.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption of travel
Y3	Part of the School Premises Closed
Y4	Whole School Site unexpectedly closed
Y5	Pupil in Criminal Justice Detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance/ law
Y7	Unable to attend for any other unavoidable cause
Absent: Unauthorised Absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances

U	Arrived in school after register closed
Administrative codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure