



Alsager School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Prepared by Mrs Adele Snape, Deputy Headteacher
November 2020

Presented for approval to the
Curriculum & Personnel Committee
on 04/11/2020 and subsequently approved and adopted
on the same date

Chair of Curriculum & Personnel Committee:
Mrs Joyce Halsall

Signature:

Date: 4/11/20

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 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.

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.

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 'Educational Welfare Service' 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.

Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the Educational Welfare Service to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01270 985943.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [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.

PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

You will receive a letter from the school advising you that it has been referred to the Local Authority and that a Penalty Notice may be issued. A Penalty Notice will be sent to you, 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	Once 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	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance.	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance.

PROCEDURES

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 school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

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 after this time will be recorded as late and will be issued with a 'same day break time detention' for a second offence or a lunch time detention for a repeat offender. The Attendance Officer will determine whether the lateness is authorised.

Holidays

The regulations linked to holidays have been changed. 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 Educational Welfare Service for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Please see appendix- 'One Minute Guide 'Taking Children on Holiday during Term Time' Frequently asked questions.

Notification of absence

Parents are required to phone or e-mail the school to notify the school of absence due to illness. 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

Leave may, however, 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 9.20. It is imperative that students do not miss this slot of 8.40-9.20. The register for the afternoon session takes place between 1.05-1.30 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.

Whole School Target

Alsager School has high expectations for the attendance of our students and expects students to have attendance of **96.4%** or above which is in line with the average attendance for the school over the last two years. We are graded a ‘Green School’ by the Educational Welfare Service as a consequence of this.

Rewarding Attendance

Through the school’s ‘Behaviour For Learning’ system. Students with good attendance are celebrated through the whole school reward system.

Form classes are celebrated for their attendance and information is displayed around the school. Various rewards such attendance stars and special attendance assemblies take place throughout the year.

All school reports include attendance information as well as authorised and unauthorised absences.

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.

Parents are required to contact the school every day of any illness.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Attendance Officer - Karen Cleaver
absence@alsagerschool.org Tel: 01270 871107

Deputy Headteacher – Adele Snape a.snape@alsagerschool.org

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

Royce College	s.clegg@alsagerschool.org
Dod College	c.rawlins@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.
