



# ***Attendance Policy***

## **2022-2023**

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Person responsible for the monitoring, evaluation and implementation of this document:

Mr S Varley, Deputy Head

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Rationale

Pupils' and students' achievement depends upon their Attendance. The highest possible level of attendance for all is the key prerequisite for translating our ambitions for them (as identified in our Values and Aims Statement), into reality.

Broken attendance, especially when avoidable, disrupts the learning of absentees, hinders teachers and pupils in classes of those returning from absence and denies everyone the continuity necessary for the school's teams' progress on every level.

It is our responsibility, therefore, to ensure each access their right to these ambitions by achieving fullest possible attendance.

However, as a school committed to finding inclusive solutions to the most challenging and complex problems our pupils and students may face, it is recognised that our attempts to find inclusive solutions may sometimes lead to a temporarily detrimental impact on whole-school attendance figures, especially where official procedures to which we are tied allow no alternative.

## 3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To ensure all pupils and groups have as near full attendance as possible and achieve at least 95%
2. To maintain a climate in which full attendance is regarded as the norm, and as a right;
3. To ensure all members of the immediate school community are fully aware of the importance of, and legal requirement for full attendance for every child and young person, and that all are committed to keep all absences, authorised and unauthorised, to an absolute minimum;
4. To minimise the disruptive effects of broken attendance on all involved
5. To ensure that all members of the school community understand and respond to the necessity of punctual registration in lessons in order to
  - i. demonstrate commitment,
  - ii. maintain an orderly start to each session and lesson,
  - iii. avoid disruption to teaching and learning and,

- iv. safeguard all pupils/students fully by being aware of their whereabouts at all times and responding immediately when we have concerns;
6. To clarify our high expectations of our partners in our work – parents, carers, pupils and students;
7. To maintain effective partnerships with our services and agencies.

## 4.0 Legislation and guidance

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:

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

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

### 5.1 The Governing Body

The Welfare Committee of the Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Governing Body's view is that where families need support in meeting Attendance and Punctuality requirements, the school will do all in its power to provide or facilitate it. However, where there is a willful refusal by parents or carers to engage, and if all other avenues have been exhausted the school will not hesitate to open the appropriate legal proceedings. This includes prosecution through the courts and the use of Fixed Penalty Notices. Fixed Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, for example:

1. Truancy (including pupils being in school but truanting from class)
2. Parentally condoned absence without good reason; excessive holidays in term time or excessive delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission;
3. Persistent late arrival at school;
4. Attendance which falls below 80% for no acceptable reason

### 5.2 The Head Teacher and Senior Staff

The head teacher, with the support of the Deputy Head teacher responsible for Attendance, 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
- Good and improving attendance is identified, celebrated and rewarded as a positive contribution to personal progress and to the development of the whole school community
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 5.3 The Attendance Improvement Officer and Pastoral Support Team

The school attendance officer & pastoral support team will

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Report concerns about attendance to the Deputy Head Teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 5.4 Class & Form Tutors

Class & Form Tutors:

- are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes
- **The legal responsibility placed upon schools for the accurate maintenance of Attendance and Absence Records is necessarily carried out through the Form Tutor.** This includes ensuring the register is accurately marked **and saved** at the beginning of the designated morning Registration Period
- ensuring that pupils who arrive after the Register is opened are marked as late
- ensuring that notification of the reasons for an absence are recorded as soon as possible after it is received, and no later than 24 hours after the child's return from absence
- Following appropriate absence procedures as defined by the Deputy Head Teacher responsible for Attendance and documented in the Guidelines for Managing Pupil Absence
- Form Tutors issue the 'Pupil Absence Catch-up Report'. The pupil then has approximately one week to get the report signed off from their teachers to show that any necessary catch-up work has been carried out. Form Tutors will liaise with their Head of Year should any clarification be needed.
- Class teachers sign-off the Pupil Absence catch-up Report when work has been caught-up.

### 5.5 Heads of Year

Heads of Year are responsible

- for supporting their Form Tutors, for example in the completion of the Pupil Absence catch-up Report,
- Informing Form Tutors when it is decided that this course of action is not appropriate. For example, if the absence is due to surgical/bereavement.
- Monitoring whole year and individual pupil attendance
- Working with the Pastoral Support Team, Attendance Officer and Deputy Head Teacher to ensure processes are followed

## 6. Recording attendance

### 6.1 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 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 8:55 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken during the first lesson of the afternoon.

### 6.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's Parent/Carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible.

Parents/Carers can report unplanned absence via

- using the EDULINK app (if Parents/Carers are not currently using this service they should contact school and EDULINK can then be set-up for them)
- calling school, and leaving a message on the absence answer-phone,
- by emailing [reception@aldergrange.com](mailto:reception@aldergrange.com),

- or by using ParentMail absence reporting.

If we do not hear from a Parent/Carer following their initial absence message the school may telephone the first priority contact, followed by the second priority contact or if deemed necessary carry-out a home visit to ascertain why a child is not attending school.

Upon their return to school the pupil's Form Tutor will issue the 'Pupil Absence Catch-up Report'. The pupil then has approximately one week to get the report signed off from their teachers to show that any necessary catch-up work has been carried out.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **6.3 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.

Parents should notify school by either emailing [reception@aldergrange.com](mailto:reception@aldergrange.com), or by sending a signed note into school for the attention of the Head Teacher. It is only the Head Teacher who can authorize any absences from school.

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 doing so using the 'Leave of Absence Request Form' located in the "Behaviour & Attendance" section of the school website

### **6.4 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

### **6.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason

- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

## 6.6 Reporting to parents

Each pupil report and Grade collection will identify to parents the current level of attendance and punctuality

## 7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion.

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

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 doing so using the 'Leave of Absence Request Form' located on the school's website.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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 belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveler pupils traveling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gipsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveler family is known to be traveling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### 7.2 Reducing persistent absence

Whilst every effort is made by school staff to encourage good attendance, where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, and is therefore classified as a persistent absentee, the school may take some or all of the following actions:

- Seek to arrange a Parenting Contract meeting with parents/carers
- Agree targets for improvement
- Refer to the Governors' Attendance Panel
- Agree a period of Attendance Monitoring



### 7.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents 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 must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head Teacher, local authority officer or the police.

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

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

## 8. Strategies for promoting attendance

Alder Grange adopts several strategies to encourage high attendance.

- Good and Improving Attendance is celebrated, and rewarded as a positive contribution to personal progress and the whole school community, for example through the “Being and Alder Granger Award”
- Attendance and Punctuality rewards are an integral part of the School Rewards system.
- We have a whole school approach and passion to our belief that attendance is the key factor in pupils achieving their full potential – involving form tutors, heads of year, class teachers, our pastoral and administration teams, and the Senior Leadership team.

## 9. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer and pastoral support team at our school monitor pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil’s parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil’s absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

## **10. Policy Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Deputy Head Teacher responsible for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Welfare Committee, and ratified by the Governing Body.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour policy

- **Appendix 1: attendance codes**

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveler absence	Pupil from a Traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day