Alderbrook School | Alderbrook Sixth Form

Attendance Policy

including pupils with health needs who cannot attend school

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Why Attendance Matters

1 Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole Alderbrook School community, enabling and encouraging all students at the school to achieve excellence. At Alderbrook School, we strive to provide each student with the highest standard of education. Attendance has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the Academy.

2 Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families.

3 Attendance also underpins the five Every Child Matters outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

4 To enable students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable, as poor attendance results in lower achievement.

Legal requirements

Parents/carers of registered students have a legal duty, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure regular and punctual attendance of students of compulsory school age and students who attend the school for post 16 education. At Alderbrook we work within the guidelines on attendance laid down by Solihull LA. Unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents/carers may be referred to the Local Authority Enforcement Team which could result in a penalty notice being issued. The school follows the National Framework for Penalty Notices, administered by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

5 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

6 We follow the Department for Education statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (July 2026 edition, as updated from time to time).

Alderbrook School's Aims and Expectations for Attendance

7 At Alderbrook School we aim to achieve 100% attendance but expect all students to meet or exceed our target of 95%. Some students are given an individual target, based on improving their percentage attendance.

8 We aim to improve all students' attainment through good attendance.

9 We expect parents and carers to

- ensure their child attends school regularly
- ensure their child is punctual to school and lessons.
- support and encourage their child by attending parents' consultation evenings and other events.
- contact their child's tutor in the first instance to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- work in collaboration with Alderbrook School to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance and attainment.

10 We aim to ensure that attendance and punctuality is a priority for everyone associated with Alderbrook School including parents/carers, students, staff and governors.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Monitor attendance trends.
- Review Persistent Absence and Severe Absence data.
- Hold school leaders to account for attendance outcomes.

Senior Attendance Champion

- Overall strategic lead for attendance.
- Ensures attendance is prioritised across the school.

Attendance Team

- Daily monitoring and intervention.
- Coordination with external agencies.

All Staff

- Promote attendance.
- Identify attendance concerns promptly

Poor attendance

11 All students' attendance will be monitored on a regular basis by Form Tutors, the Attendance coordinator and the Education Welfare Officer and SEND link.

12 Attendance data will be reviewed regularly to identify individuals, groups and emerging trends. The impact of interventions will be evaluated and adapted as necessary.

13 Alderbrook School adopts a support-first approach. We seek to understand and address barriers to attendance through early identification, regular communication with families, and coordinated support plans before legal intervention is considered.

14 The school will pay particular attention to pupils with SEND, mental or physical health needs, young carers, children with a social worker and pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.

15 Where mental health is affecting attendance, the school will work with pupils, families, health professionals and other partners to remove barriers and support reintegration.

16 Alderbrook School will employ strategies to help improve the attendance of students who fall below the 95% target. This may include monitoring, meeting with the student, written contact with home, or meeting with the student and parents/carers together. If students' attendance does not improve following support, further action may be considered.

17 The Government classes a student as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level can do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

18 The Government classes a student as "severely absent" (SA) when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level can do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

19 The school works closely with the Local authority EPAS (Education Participation Advisory Service) team to support families to remove barriers to attendance.

20 If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

21 We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority, a referral will be made to the School Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

22 All students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

23 Any student with attendance difficulties will be closely monitored by our pastoral team. We acknowledge that every student must be considered individually to properly understand the context of any absence. Our pastoral team will plan, carry out and record a series of actions that are considered to be appropriate to the context of the situation. These actions may include:

- a phone call from the Attendance Coordinator; EWO; Pastoral Manager; Head of Year to discuss and plan a way forward
- a meeting with the Attendance Coordinator; EWO; Head of Year or Pastoral Manager to agree an attendance contract
- a student being monitored using our Report System
- an unannounced home visit from our Pastoral Team and/or EWO
- a Pastoral Support Plan to help the student reintegrate into school over a defined period of time
- intervention sessions with our Pastoral Manager to address any underlying difficulties that may impact attendance

- a meeting with a member of the Local authority EPAS team
- a police safe and well check
- an information letter which details the attendance data for an individual
- an attendance concern letter which confirms when a student has moved into the PA category
- a warning letter (Notice to Improve) to the parents which details the risk of legal proceedings from Solihull Local Authority's Education Enforcement Team
- an official warning letter which activates legal proceedings, this may include a sanction such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court
- an official final warning letter which confirms legal proceedings

24 For our PA/SA students and their parents may be subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through, the EWO, a mentor, external agencies or individual programmes personally designed to support better attendance.

25 Any reduced or part-time timetable offered will be time-limited, agreed with parents/carers, clearly documented and reviewed regularly with the aim of returning the pupil to full-time education as soon as possible.

26 Where attendance concerns exist and there is uncertainty regarding the reason for absence, the school may request appropriate medical evidence. Requests will always consider the individual circumstances of the pupil and family.

27 In all other cases of unauthorised absence accrued over time and following a referral from school, a warning letter will be issued by the Education Enforcement Team prior to a penalty notice. The trigger for a warning letter will be at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence. There are two sessions per day, a morning session and afternoon session. As a school we are required to provide two possible sessions per day, morning and afternoon, to all pupils.

28 If ten sessions of unauthorised absence are accrued in a 10 week rolling period a penalty notice will be applied for.

- A first penalty £160 reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (per parent, per child)
- A second penalty within three years £160 with no reduction
- A third Penalty Notice will not normally be issued within three years and alternative legal action may be considered.

Educational Welfare Officer

29 The Alderbrook EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) works with schools, parents, external agencies and the Local Authority to remove obstacles to attendance, and to resolve any issues that may be impacting on a child attending school regularly. The EWO can support, signpost and advise regarding any issues around school attendance/punctuality.

30 The EWO also discharges the school's safeguarding duties regarding unannounced safe and well home visits when students are absent from school (between 3 and 5 school days)

31 Safeguarding and attendance interventions are part of school's statutory responsibilities. Parents/carers are considered to have accepted these processes once they have accepted a place at school.

32 Parents/carers can expect a visit from the EWO if their child's attendance becomes a concern.

33 Whilst the EWO works closely with SMBC Enforcement Team, the EWO also aims to work collaboratively with parents to avoid, wherever possible, escalation via the legal process.

34 The EWO works within Government guidelines to ensure that all children have the right to access education.

Registration

35 The following documents should be referred to for statutory requirements and guidance in regard to completing and maintaining an attendance register:

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016 amendment of the 2006 regulations
- School Attendance DfE
- Keeping Pupil Registers DCSF

36 Schools have a statutory duty to maintain two legal documents

- An Admissions Roll
- An Attendance Register, which must be kept accurately. The school has an electronic registration system.

37 Attendance and lateness are also recorded for each of the five periods in the school day.

38 Attendance registers are taken at the same designated time for all pupils during the morning session and during the statutory afternoon session in accordance with DfE requirements.

39 On each occasion, the school must record whether a child is present, absent or present at an approved educational activity.

40 Every half day of absence from school must be classified by Alderbrook School as either authorised or unauthorised and the regulation codes must be used.

- **Authorised absence** is where the Head Teacher or Attendance Coordinator has given approval in advance for the student to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence
- Examples of authorised absence include religious observance, medical appointments, orthodontist appointments or illness. All of these require written confirmation from a parent/carer.
- Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school time. Normal dental appointments must always be outside of school time.
- **Religious observance**: Students may take one day due to religious observance and this will be marked as an authorised absence with an R code for that day.

- Alderbrook School can authorise a maximum of two school days in the academic school year for religious observance. Parents/carers should always notify school in writing before a religious observance day is taken.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

41 To create a pattern of regular attendance it is important a whole school approach is taken by parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.

42 Form tutors will speak to students who have been absent and praise improvements.

43 The school will celebrate excellent attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.

44 The school will reward 100% attendance by issuing certificates termly and organising prize draws each half term.

Absence and Punctuality Procedures for Parents/Carers

45 Parents/carers must inform the school of their child's absence on the first day and each subsequent day of absence and provide their child with a note explaining the absence upon their return to school.

46 To report an absence please phone the school on: 0121 704 2146, followed by option **1**, then option **2**, or email absence@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk

47 If your child is absent the school will:

- check our attendance line and log the reason for absence;
- telephone or text you on every day of absence if we have not heard from you - failure to give a reason for absence will result in the absence being unauthorised.
- visit your home if we are unable to establish contact over a period of days; this is to safeguard the student;
- request support from the police if we are unable to establish contact following an unsuccessful visit.

48 If there is an issue, please contact the school Attendance Administrator on the number above and your message will be directed to the correct personnel in school.

49 While some delays are unavoidable, students should be punctual to registration and lessons to receive a present mark.

50 Students arriving to school after the beginning of school day at 8.30 am must report and sign in at the Student Office. Failure to do so may result in an unauthorised absence.

51 Students arriving between 8.45 and 9.30 am require a note from a parent/carer giving a reason for the lateness. The student will then be given a late but present mark.

52 Students arriving after 9.30 am must have a note giving a suitable reason for the lateness. They will then be marked as an authorised absence for the morning session. Failure to provide a note will result in an unauthorised absence mark.

53 Regularly arriving late can result in legal action for failing to ensure regular attendance. If ten sessions of unauthorised absence are then accrued a penalty notice warning must be considered.

Leave of Absence during Term Time:

54 From September 2013, it is no longer lawful for students to be granted leave of absence for holidays during term time and therefore the Head Teacher will not be able to give you permission.

55 The Head Teacher can consider requests made by parents/carers in advance for a leave of absence from school for students in ***exceptional circumstances,*** as guided by the Solihull Local Authority.

56 Should you believe that your request may fall into this very rare category of **'exceptional circumstances'** then you will need to make a written request for leave of absence to the Head Teacher.

57 Parents/carers should be made aware that if they do take holiday in term time and it does not fall into the category exceptional circumstances it will lead to the student being automatically marked as an unauthorised absence. If ten sessions of unauthorised absence are accrued the school will refer the matter to the Local Authority Enforcement Team, where consideration will be given to the insufficient of a penalty notice. The School will then consider whether to refer the matter to Solihull Local Authority Education Welfare Service to take appropriate legal action.

58 The attendance team will monitor unauthorised holidays that take place in the same week as a bank holiday. If this occurs on more than one occasion the school will refer the matter to the Local Authority Enforcement team.

Procedure for Requesting a Planned Absence during Term Time:

59 All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (Appendix 1) and submit this to the school at least four weeks prior to the date required. The school will respond to the request at least two weeks prior to the requested date. If the school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.

60 If a parent/carer desires their child to have a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances they should complete an Absence Request Form which can be obtained from the school office (Appendix 1) or follow the Absence Contact Form on the school website. Parent/carers must provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head Teacher and/or the Attendance Coordinator.

61 If the Head Teacher deems that the reasons for the request ***are*** exceptional and authorises the absences, a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.

62 If the Head Teacher deems that the reasons are ***not*** exceptional, or has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence and the student's attendance record, the leave of absence will not be authorised. A letter informing the parents/carers of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence being taken will be sent to each parent/carer.

63 If an absence is taken without having been requested or authorised it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the students register. If ten or more unauthorised absences (sessions) are taken, these will be referred immediately to the Solihull Local Authority Enforcement Team for consideration and could result in the issue of a penalty notice.

Overseas Extended Trips

64 Parents/carers may wish to take their child/children on an extended overseas trip during term time – for example, to enable their child/children to meet members of their extended family overseas. Whilst it is important to recognise the educational and cultural significance of such visits the leave of absence during term time ruling of September 2013 also applies in these circumstances.

65 The Education Regulations 1995 state that where a student has been granted an extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable causes, his/her name may be deleted from the admissions register. This would only be considered following consultation with Solihull Local Authority Education EPAS Team.

The School's Policy

66 The school considers that all absences from school will disrupt a child's continuity of learning. As a consequence it believes that absences should be kept to a minimum in order to maximise your child's potential.

67 The school requires you to complete this form for any planned absence, whatever the circumstance. Should you wish to attach a supporting letter, this will also be considered when determining whether the absence would be deemed authorised/not authorised.

What the Law says

68 From 1 September 2013, The Pupil Registration (2006) Regulations have been amended to make it clear that parents/carers do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term-time holiday. Holidays during term time should be seen as an exception to the norm.

69 It is the decision of the Head teacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for term-time absence will be considered on an individual basis. A Head teacher will not accept as an exceptional circumstance the fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time.

70 An exceptional circumstance is much more likely to be a one-off. The Head teacher will also look very carefully at the child's previous attendance record and should he or she have concerns, for example, should the child's average attendance be below 95%, it is highly unlikely that the Head teacher will agree to authorise any further absence.

71 Other factors will include the likely impact on the child's education, particularly in terms of continuity of learning; there is a strong link between the amount of absence in a school and the qualifications that its pupils achieve; whether the holiday falls during a year in which the child is due to take a public examination or be involved in Government tests (e.g. SATs/Exams).

Applying for Leave of Absence during Term Time

72 Parents/carers are advised to apply for leave of absence before they confirm their holiday arrangements. Applications should be made using the reverse side of this form at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed holiday dates.

73 Parents/carers will be informed, in writing, of the outcome of their application for leave of absence.

Students with medical needs that cannot attend school policy:

74 Alderbrook school aims to support the local authority and ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to health needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical condition allows, to enable them to reach their full potential. Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or placed in alternative forms of education provision. We recognise that, whenever possible, pupils should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are well enough. We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the local authority, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with health needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

75 Where pupils are unable to attend school due to health needs, the school will work with the local authority and relevant professionals to ensure suitable education is provided as quickly as possible.

Reintegration

76 When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a reintegration plan in collaboration with any other agencies.

77 The school will work with the local authority when reintegration into school is anticipated to plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside school.

78 As far as possible, the child will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school.

79 The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil.

80 For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the pupil's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill pupil or their parents in the early stages of their absence.

81 The school is aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the student, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

82 The school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage pupils and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

Appendix 1 - Leave of Absence Request Form

Leave of Absence Application		
Child(ren)'s name		Class/Form
Office Use Only: Level of attendance during last academic year……, current academic year…….. Other relevant information e.g. tests planned, out of school learning planned. ……..		
Date for which leave of absence is required		
From: **(first day of absence)**	**To:** **(last day of absence)**	**Number of School Days:**
Destination:		
Please give the reasons for requesting this leave of absence in term time …… …… …… (You may wish to attach a separate letter to support your request) Date: …….. Signed: …… (Parent/Carer)		
Siblings at other schools Name: ……. School: …… Name: ……. School: ……		
To be completed by Head Teacher (or nominated person) Leave of absence **authorised/ not authorised** (delete as appropriate) Date: …….. Signed: ……..		