



# Alderman White School

A member of The White Hills Park Trust

## Attendance Policy

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Ratified on behalf of the Governing Body by:	Clare Goodyear
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## 1. Introduction

Alderman White School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We recognise the importance of regular attendance and the impact that it can have on student success both academically and socially.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. This is supported by other policies including our Anti-bullying policy, Behaviour policy, Teaching and Learning policy and Safeguarding policy.

We expect that students will be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We aim to build relationships with parents and our students to help support excellent attendance and punctuality.

### 1.1 Legislation and Statutory Requirements

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education, either by regularly attending school or otherwise.

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents have a legal responsibility for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. If a child fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence.

Schools and academies are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all students who are registered at the School.

### 1.2 Key Staff

Although key members of staff have been detailed below, the tutor will also play a key role in monitoring attendance and supporting improvement where necessary.

Name	Role
Annwen Mellors	Headteacher
Dave Farnie	Deputy Headteacher and SLT attendance lead
Linda Philpot	Attendance officer and EWO

If you need to report an absence or would like to discuss your child's attendance, please contact Linda Philpot (Attendance Officer) using the contact details below:

Phone: 0115 9175959

Email: [attendance@aldermanwhite.school](mailto:attendance@aldermanwhite.school)

## 2. Policy Aims

For a child to reach their educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. We aim for every child to attend well and arrive on time for school every day providing them with a good foundation on which to be successful. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and parents/carers the importance of regular, and punctual, attendance.

From September 2022 our target is average attendance of at least 97%.

### 2.1 Expectations

We expect that our students will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- Inform a member of staff of any issues or problems that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect that parents will:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly.
- Contact the school prior to the start of the school day when their child is absent.
- Support their child in ensuring that they are punctual every day.
- Communicate any concerns they have which may prevent their child from attending school.

Parents and students can expect that the school will:

- Record attendance accurately and efficiently and provide updates regarding attendance.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Intervene where appropriate to ensure that any issues that may prevent a student from attending school is resolved.

## 3. Legal responsibilities relating to attendance

Once a child is of compulsory school age, they must receive suitable full-time education. Once you have registered your child at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to attend school regularly, you are at risk of getting a penalty notice or being prosecuted in court (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996).

Alderman White School is responsible for the accurate recording of attendance each day.

We aim to build positive relationships with both students and their parents, providing support to parents in meeting their legal obligations relating to attendance.

## 4. In-school attendance responsibilities

The Deputy Headteacher has overall responsibility for the strategic lead of attendance.

The Attendance Officer assumes responsibility for the daily operation of attendance processes and actions and will lead on interventions to support improving attendance. The Attendance Officer will produce reports relating to attendance and ensuring the attendance policy is adhered to.

The Progress Leader for each year group will support the actions taken by the Attendance Officer to improve the attendance of individual students and will lead on promoting good attendance and punctuality with their year group. The Progress Leader will ensure good practice relating to attendance within their tutor team and will monitor the attendance of all students in their year group. All concerns are passed on to the Attendance Officer in regular attendance strategy meetings.

Tutors are responsible for completing daily registers appropriately, promoting good attendance with their tutees and pursuing poor attendance.

Class teachers are responsible for prompt and accurate completion of lesson registers (within the first 10 minutes of every lesson) and for raising a 'suspicious absence' if they notice a student has been present in school but is missing from their lesson without their knowledge.

#### 5. Promoting good attendance

Alderman White School will seek regular opportunities to promote good attendance. This will be achieved through regular contact with parents and assemblies and tutor activities which promote good attendance. Students will be encouraged to understand impacts of poor attendance and punctuality and will be offered support in improvement where required.

#### **Recognising excellent attendance**

We will recognise excellent attendance and where students have made a concerted effort to improve their attendance.

#### **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets exists and the Deputy Headteacher is responsible for overseeing this work.

#### 6. The registration system

We use BROMCOM for keeping school attendance records. Parents are able to check their child's attendance using the MCAS app which links to BROMCOM.

Registration marks will be recorded for each lesson and where students are absent, action will be taken to resolve this.

#### 7. Punctuality

We recognise the importance of good punctuality and expect students to arrive at school on time every day. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55am for Yr7 and Yr8 and at 9am for Yr9, Yr10 and Yr11. The afternoon registration will be at 12:45pm for Yr7 and Yr8 and 13:35pm for Yr9, Yr10 and Yr11.

The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical/dental appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Any student who is late twice in a week will attend a 20 minute Late 'Reflection' period at the end of the same day of the second time they were late. Students who are persistently late may be invited to attend a Welfare Meeting with their parents/carers to discuss issues of punctuality with the Attendance Officer and/or the Progress Leader for their year group.

## 8. Reasons for absence

Whilst we recognise that sometimes absence is unavoidable, we can only authorise a limited number of reasons for student absence.

Acceptable reasons for absence include:

- Medical appointments (All appointments, wherever possible, should be taken outside school hours)
- Medical procedures / recovery
- Illness or injury – the student is too unwell to attend school (medical evidence may be requested for prolonged or frequent periods of illness)
- Where the student has been advised not to attend by a medical practitioner (school may require evidence of this)
- An infectious illness or disease that should not be passed to others (including COVID).
- A day set aside for Observance by the religious body to which the students' parents belong.
- To attend a job or college interview which cannot be organised outside school hours.
- To take part in approved public performances.
- To take part in approved sporting events or public exams.
- A "exceptional circumstance" agreed in advance

Unacceptable reasons for absences include:

- Birthdays
- Minding the house/waiting for deliveries or tradesmen
- Shopping
- Uniform not available/in the wash
- Looking after siblings
- Oversleeping
- Parents needing support
- Term-time holidays

## 9. Authorising absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, initially by a phone call/email to the school Attendance Officer, or using the My Child At School (MCAS) app.

### Authorised absence

Alderman White School is unable to authorise any absence during term time unless the reason is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. **Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.**

Medical appointments should be taken outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum time possible. Parents must notify the school in advance of any planned medical/dental appointment and may be asked to provide evidence of the appointment to the Attendance Officer.

### Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This is likely to be caused when:

- There is no parental explanation
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation for absence

#### 10. Application for Leave of Absence

The Headteacher can only authorise a leave of absence during term time in **exceptional circumstances**. This does not usually include holidays during term time.

All leave of absence requests will be decided on a case by case basis by the Headteacher. It will be up to the discretion of the Headteacher as to if the request constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance'. Circumstances which may be considered exceptional include:

- A family event such as a wedding or funeral
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Travel to observe a religious event that cannot be taken outside of school hours

If a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, this must be made in writing using the Leave of Absence Request form (found on the school website) at least four weeks in advance of the date of absence, or as much notice as possible. This must be agreed prior to the absence being taken.

Where a Leave of Absence is not authorised, a referral may be made to the Attendance Enforcement Team. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. (See Section 13).

#### 11. Unplanned Absence - Procedures

##### First Day Absence

On the first day of absence and every day after, the parents/carer should contact the school and inform the Attendance Officer of the reason for absence by phone, email or the My Child At School app (MCAS) by 8:30am. If no contact is made with school, the Attendance Officer will contact home to inform parents/carers of the absence and to discover the reason for the absence. We will use all contacts provided when trying to make contact regarding attendance and may make a visit to the home if deemed necessary.

##### Subsequent Days of Absence

The parent should contact the school on the morning of each day of absence if the absence goes beyond the first day unless a doctor's note has been provided which identifies a specified period of absence, or a period of absence has been agreed.

##### Third Day Absence

If, after the third day of absence, there has been no contact with parents/carers, a home visit will take place. If contact remains unsuccessful, a letter will be sent requesting immediate contact with school to explain the absence.

##### Continuing absence of five days or more

If there is no response to the letter, the Attendance Officer may undertake a further home visit, without prior notice, and will then take further appropriate action which will include a referral to the Nottinghamshire County Council School Attendance Team.

A referral will automatically be made to Nottinghamshire County Council Children Missing Officer, no later than day 10 of an absence if there is no explanation for absence and all checks to locate a missing student have been completed. These checks will include further home visits and contact with other professionals and family members to assist in locating a missing student.

### Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of pastoral staff including tutors to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the student and their parents/carers, usually by inviting them to attend a Welfare Meeting with a member of the Pastoral team. If there is no improvement further support will be offered, but the parents/carers may also be at risk of a fixed penalty notice or being prosecuted in court if there is no acceptable reason for the absence.

### Return from Absence

It is important that on return from an absence all students must report to the Base prior to attending their lessons. Where there has been an extended absence, the school will consider bespoke support to help the student reintegrated back into school.

### 12. School reluctance and refusal

Some students may occasionally be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Where a student refuses to attend school, the parent and child will be invited in to school for a meeting with the Progress Leader for their year group. The purpose of the meeting will be to identify any barriers to attendance and discuss strategies to support a successful reintegration to school.

### 13. Enforcement

If a child has more than 6 sessions (3 days) of unauthorised absence within any six-week period the school may refer the absence to the Nottinghamshire School Attendance Enforcement Team who may issue a penalty notice.

A penalty notice is issued to **each parent** who is considered legally responsible for the child. The penalty is a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. This increases to £120 after 21 days but must be paid within 28 days.






If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the local authority has no option but to prosecute in the Magistrates' Court. This could lead to a fine of up to £2,500 and can also lead to community service, or up to a 3-month custodial sentence and a parenting order.

There is no right of appeal against an Education Penalty Notice once it has been issued. If a parent believes that their child's leave of absence was not properly understood and that it should have been considered as exceptional by the Headteacher, the parent should make contact with the school directly.



Appendix 1: Absence

<b>White Hills Park Trust</b>
<b>175 non-school days a year</b>
<b>175 days to spend on family time, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments</b>

<b>Attend 190 school days</b>	<b>8 days absence</b>	<b>10 days absence</b>	<b>19 days absence</b>	<b>20 days absence</b>
	<b>Attend 182 school days</b>		<b>Attend 180 school days</b>	
				<b>Attend fewer than 170 school days</b>
<b>100%</b> 	<b>96%</b> 	<b>95%</b> 	<b>90%</b> 	<b>&gt; 90%</b> 
<b>Good</b> <b>This gives your child the best chance of success, and gets your child off to a flying start</b>	<b>Worrying</b> <b>Less chance of success -makes it harder for your child to make progress</b>  <b>The same as missing at least half a year of your time at ALDERMAN WHITE SCHOOL</b>		<b>Serious Concern</b> <b>This is not fair on your child and may result in court action</b>  <b>The same as missing at least one whole year of your time at ALDERMAN WHITE SCHOOL</b>	
<b>Students who are persistently late could be classified as truanting</b>				

## Appendix 2: DFE Approved Attendance Codes

The following national codes are used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances