

Attendance Policy

Parental Summary



Alderman Knight School is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers, governors and the Local Authority to ensure Alderman Knight School provides a supportive learning community that enables all its pupils to thrive. It is recognised that the rate of pupil progress is improved with regular attendance at school. Therefore, we will do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in our care achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

The school attendance target is 93% and this is the minimum target set by the Local Authority for all schools. It is worth noting that pupils with an attendance figure of 90% or below (at least 1 day off school every two weeks) are labelled as “persistent absentees” by the Department for Education. Pupils whose attendance is at 50% or below (at least 5 days off every two weeks) are labelled as “severe absentees” by the same authority.

Expectations:

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly (93% or above)
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day dressed in school uniform and with any additional equipment or clothing required for the day
- Discuss promptly with their Form Tutor or linked Assistant Headteacher any problems that deter them from attending school regularly and promptly

We expect that all parents and carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child/children arrive at school punctually and are prepared for the school day
- Ensure that they contact the Attendance Officer via Weduc or telephone whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend school
- Contact the Attendance Officer by 9.00am, on the first day of the child’s absence, and each morning thereafter
- Contact the Attendance Officer promptly whenever any problems occur that may keep the child away from school

We expect that school staff will:

- Keep daily and accurate records of attendance
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil does not come into school and no message has been left to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences
- Encourage good attendance (at least 93%)
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for all pupils
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil’s concerns
- Make contact with parents and carers of pupils who are not attending regularly
- Arrange for a meeting to discuss with parents/carers any irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance.

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1. Present at School (and Punctuality)

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. A pupil is considered late if they arrive after the times highlighted below;

The school day starts at 8:40am for Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils must be in school for this time. Pupils who arrive after 8:50am will be marked as late and the appropriate code will be issued.

The school day starts at 8:50am for Primary and Post 16. Pupils must be in school for this time. Pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be marked as late and the appropriate code will be issued.

Please rest assured that we are mindful of the issues with transport and traffic in the local area and will be sympathetic should there be unavoidable delays.

If a pupil is transported by taxi and arrives late to school, the school will contact the provider or parent to see if this was due to late collection or a delay at home. Such instances will be monitored.

If the school is aware of major disruption on the roads they are able to allow some flexibility to the above lateness criteria and thus make reasonable adjustments.

Effects of Late Arrival at School

It is really important that pupils are supported to arrive on time and be present for registration sessions. As you are aware we have deliberately built in additional tutor time for our pupils so that we can help settle them for the day. When a child arrives late to school, they will miss important information about the day as well as important parts of our day, all built in to support your children. This includes; assemblies, wake and shake sessions, reading sessions, weekly Maths challenges and general time for discussing plans for the day and checking in how everyone is feeling. It is really hard for children when they are late to come in and try and catch up.

It would be reasonable to imagine that only being 5 or 10 minutes late does not impact much on the learning opportunities of your child. However, the information below shows just how quickly small amounts of time will add up to a significant chunk of time that really will make a difference. It also impacts on the other pupils as the staff often need to recap to ensure everybody is clear about the day ahead or the activity being delivered.

Minutes Late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year
5 Minutes	3 Days
15 Minutes	9 Days
30 Minutes	18 Days

Actions that will be taken as a result of lateness

When a pupil arrives late to school, they will be signed in by Christine Beale in the school's Main Reception. As well as the time of arrival they will also establish the reason for lateness Pupils will also be asked about their lunch preferences at this time. They will then be taken, or will walk independently (depending on their level of independence) to their tutor room or lesson depending on their time of arrival.

The tutor team need to monitor lateness and will ensure that parents/ carers are aware if pupils have arrived

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late and give the reason why. If a taxi is repeatedly late then Christine Beale will contact the taxi company directly and may also choose to inform GCC Transport.

If pupils are being brought in by parents/carers and are late, then the tutor needs to remind parents of the importance of punctuality and monitor carefully. If there is no improvement, despite tutor intervention via Weduc then a phone call, tutors should notify the Attendance Officer, Marina Brown. Please note that a log of contact with parents/carers regarding attendance must be kept. If the situation does not improve, the Attendance Lead, Mr Paul Smith will need to send a letter home or call an Attendance Improvement Meeting.

When a pupil is identified as being regularly late (hitting the triggers) and there is no sufficient explanation for the continued lateness, the Attendance Officer will, on the agreement of the Attendance Lead, send an initial information letter to the parents/carers and/or will notify the Local Authority transport team.

Communication by letter with parents/carers when punctuality becomes a significant concern.

The trigger for a more formal approach and the sending of a letter may differ from pupil to pupil depending on individual circumstances. These are possible triggers and individual circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis. The letters referred to in the table below are **merely examples** of a graduated approach but we will always seek to act on an individual basis, taking into account all relevant information before actioning.

Letter	Punctuality Communication	Responsible	*Potential trigger – please note this may vary depending on an individual pupil's circumstances. Parents/carers must have been contacted by the tutor (Weduc then phone call) before the letter 1 trigger is actioned
1	Punctuality Letter of Concern	Attendance Lead	*2 lates in a week (without good reason) on more than one occasion and/or if a pupil is late on 10 occasions. A punctuality letter of concern may be sent before this if both the tutor t and Attendance Lead feel this is appropriate
2	Formal Written Warning	Attendance Lead	Letter has no impact within first 4 weeks of first letter being sent
3	Invitation to AIM	Attendance Lead	Lates continuing despite formal letter
4	Follow Up to AIM	Attendance Lead	AIM targets not hit
5	Penalty Notice Warning	Headteacher	Parent/ carer not working with the school to improve situation and lateness continues

2. Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

An absence is authorised by the school when a pupil:

- Is absent with the prior permission of the school
- Is too ill to attend school or attending a medical appointment (and school have been informed)
- Is absent due to a religious observance
- Is absent due to family bereavement
- Is suspended from school
- Has traveller parents/carers and the absence is related to this

2.1 Illness:

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. In some case the school may request a "Consent to Share" form be completed by the parent/carer to allow for direct contact with medical professionals to take place.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent/carer. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

If your child is ill and unable to attend school, please inform the school Attendance Officer, either via telephone or Weduc, **by 9:00am on the first day of illness**. You can, of course, let the tutor team know but it is very important that the Attendance Officer is also notified. The tutor team may not be able to pass a message to the office in a timely manner due to their time pressured role in school.

If a child is absent for more than one day, parents/ carers are expected to contact the school each day by 9:00am to provide an update on their child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

2.2 Dental/ Medical appointments:

Parents/carers are requested to notify the Attendance Officer as far in advance as possible of all planned appointments by completing the Medical Appointment Absence Request form on Weduc. **You will be asked to provide proof of appointments** e.g. letters etc. Where possible we ask that these appointments are made out of school time or during school holidays, especially for routine check-ups. We also ask that the pupil attends school either side of the appointment to avoid further impact on learning if at all possible.

3. First Day of Absence

If the school has not been informed as to the reason for a child's absence, then they will contact the person allocated as priority 1 on the child's emergency details. The school aim to do this between the hours of 9:00am -10:00am each day. The attendance officer will contact via Weduc/email in the first instance, followed by a telephone call if there is no response within a reasonable time frame of sending the message.

The school will prioritise those children considered vulnerable e.g. Children Looked After; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing and also pupils who make their own way to school.

The school will ask that an expected return date is given if possible. This may be if a child has sickness and diarrhoea, Covid, a broken bone etc. This will then be recorded and Arbor will be updated. No further contact will need to be made during this absence period by the Attendance Officer. If the pupil absence is only expected to be one day, then no recorded date will be taken. This will allow for a call to be made the following day if the pupil remains absent.

The school will ask that an expected return date is given if possible.

If the school is unable to contact any of the numbers provided as contacts, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may request a Welfare Check from the safeguarding team or police.

If a child with an allocated social worker has 2 days or more of absence, the school has a duty of care and are required to notify the social worker.

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4. Further Days of Absence

If the school has not previously been informed as to the reason for a child's continued absence, then they will follow the process in point 3 above.

5. Long Term Absences

There may be an occasion where a pupil will be absent from school for longer than two weeks. This could be due to visiting family abroad or a religious occasion. In these circumstances a forwarding contact address, telephone number and email address must be produced for the period of time the pupil is absent. Arbor will be pre-populated for the expected absence time and an expected return date listed.

6. Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance and legislation has changed in recent times and this clearly states that schools can no longer authorise any leave of absence **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. These exceptional circumstances are detailed in DfE guidance and it is only with the Headteacher's expressed permission that these absences can be granted. Parents/carers are legally obliged to make a written request for permission for a child to be absent from school during term time. Therefore, parents/carers must submit a Request for Leave of Absence form through Weduc stating the reason for the absence. The Attendance Lead and Headteacher will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives and must be sought in advance.

As stated above, the school will not grant leave of absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the request whilst taking into consideration the pupil's current attendance and other relevant factors. Please be aware that you may be required to provide the school with additional information in order to support your request. Some possible examples of exceptional circumstances are;

- Funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- Wedding of a parent or sibling
- Religious observance
- Sporting events or performing arts competitions at county/national level, if the child is participating
- Graduation ceremony of an immediate family member

Please note if the school does not consider the request to be an “exceptional circumstance” then the absence will be refused. Absences taken without the permission of the Headteacher will be marked as unauthorised absence and, in the case of a parent/carer taking their child on an unauthorised holiday (G code) during term time then there is the risk of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

7. Unauthorised Absence:

An absence of a pupil is marked as unauthorised when a pupil is absent from school and the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents/carers can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a present mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Examples such as waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips

- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, and in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences **may** ultimately result in legal sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or a referral to the Local Authority for prosecution. However we will work closely with parents and carers to avoid this if at all possible.

Attendance Rate	School Days Missed
98% attendance means	4 school days missed
95% attendance means	10 school days missed
93% attendance means	12 days missed
90% attendance means	19 school days missed
80% attendance means	38 school days missed

8. Actions that will be taken as a result of persistent non-attendance

The school's attendance target is 93%. This is the minimum target set by Gloucestershire Local Authority for all schools.

The school will always look to work **with** families to ensure attendance at school is as good as it can be. Should there be any specific attendance concerns then these will be discussed by the relevant staff responsible for attendance and an appropriate intervention will take place (see the table below).

Given the varied needs of our pupils, the percentages below will be used as a gauge to determine whether the tolerance has been reached but this will only be a trigger and will not (alone) directly lead to an intervention. The letters referred to in the table below are **merely examples** of a graduated approach but we will always seek to act on an individual basis, taking into account all relevant information before actioning.

Letter	Attendance Communication	Responsible	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
6	Attendance Letter of Concern	Attendance Lead	88%* or several broken weeks	90% or several broken weeks	92% or several broken weeks
7	Formal Written Warning	Attendance Lead	85% or no improvement	88% or no improvement	90% or no improvement
8	Invitation to AIM	Attendance Lead	Further Absence		
9	Follow Up to AIM	Attendance Lead	AIM targets not hit		
10	Penalty Notice Warning	Headteacher or Attendance Lead	Further Absence		

9. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

Alderman Knight School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a safe, caring and welcoming environment

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- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's/carer's concerns about the school or other pupils
- By marking registers accurately on Arbor on a daily basis
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics
- By celebrating good and improved attendance
- By monitoring pupil's attendance, keeping a record of all absences and reasons for absence (authorised or unauthorised), the action taken, arranging meetings with parents/carers, referral to the Education Inclusion Service (if there is no considerable improvement in attendance following meetings).

10. Attendance Rewards:

- At the end of every full term (December/April/July) awards will be presented to the tutor groups with the best attendance for that term to Primary, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in the Celebration Assemblies. Tutor groups will be presented with a certificate, an award or both. Tutor teams and the linked Assistant Headteachers can also request attendance awards for pupils whose attendance has improved over the term.
- At the end of the autumn and spring terms certificates will be awarded in assembly to pupils with 100% attendance for that term. Tutor teams and the linked Assistant Headteachers can also request attendance awards for pupils whose attendance has improved over the term.
- At the end of year assembly certificates will be given to pupils who have achieved 100% attendance for the whole year. Certificates will also be presented to the Primary and Secondary tutor groups with the best attendance for the whole school year. Tutor teams and linked Assistant Headteachers can also request attendance awards for pupils whose attendance has improved over the year.
- Please note it is appreciated that, **for some pupils, due to their particular needs**, periods of absence may be unavoidable. They will not be penalised for absences that are unavoidable and they will still be eligible to receive attendance awards.