



## AYLESBURY HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Status</b>	<b>Non - Statutory</b>	<b>Date created</b>	<b>November 2006</b>
<b>Any other statutory names for this policy (where applicable)</b>		<b>Date first approved</b>	<b>November 2006</b>
<b>Responsibility for this policy (job title)</b>	<b>Assistant Head</b>	<b>Date last reviewed</b>	<b>January 2020</b>
<b>Governors' Committee with responsibility for its review</b>	<b>T&amp;L</b>	<b>Frequency of review</b>	<b>Three Years</b>
<b>Tick here if Buckinghamshire Council Policy attached in its entirety</b>		<b>To be put on the school website? (Yes/No)</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Approval necessary</b>	<b>Sub-committee only</b>		

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# 1. Aims

At Aylesbury High School, it is our aim that students and staff should enjoy learning, experience success and develop their full potential. The aim of the Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of students and staff. There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. In addition, students with persistent absence are less likely to stay in education. The Department for Education (DfE) published research in 2016 which found that:

- The higher the overall absence rate across Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4
- Students with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A\*- C or equivalent including English and mathematics than students that missed 15-20% of KS4 lessons

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student 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.

We aim for the highest levels of attendance. Anything under 95% is a cause for concern and the School may contact parents if it drops below this level. If attendance drops below 90% parents will receive a letter home. In Years 7 to 11, if a student's attendance over a period of five weeks is under 85% and causing concern, we will write to parents/carers about our duty to alert the County Attendance Team. If attendance does not subsequently improve, action will be taken with external agencies as appropriate.

## 2. 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:

[The Education Act 1996](#)

[The Education Act 2002](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)

[The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)

[The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) 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.

# 3. School procedures

## 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (in the afternoon). It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Our attendance registers are taken on SIMS and are preserved for at least the statutory 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students are expected to be on site and in tutor rooms by 8.45am each morning. Students must not arrive before 7.30 am and any who arrive before 8am, or who are on site after the end of the school day and not in supervised clubs with members of staff, should wait in the canteen.

## 3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must **contact the school's absence line on 01296 388230** on the first day of an unplanned absence and on every subsequent day of absence – by 9 am or as soon as practically possible.

### 3.2.1 Illness or other unforeseen absences

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.

### Absences of up to four days

If these four days are the only days of absence, and a telephone call has been made on each of the days using the number above, no further written note is needed.

### Absences of five days or more

For longer absences, parents should continue to use the absence line to keep the school informed. **When the student returns to school, parents should email their Pastoral Support Assistant explaining the absence:**

KS3 Pastoral Support Assistant Mrs Natalie Prickett [nprickett@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:nprickett@ahs.bucks.sch.uk)

KS4 Pastoral Support Assistant Mrs Lin Faulkner [lfaulkner@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:lfaulkner@ahs.bucks.sch.uk)

KS5 Pastoral Support Assistant Mrs Tracy Dalby [tdalby@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:tdalby@ahs.bucks.sch.uk)

All emails should be clearly marked with the student's name, form, dates and reason for absence.

### Absence of ten days or more

If a student is absent without a satisfactory explanation for 10 consecutive days, we have a legal duty to report the absence to the County Attendance Team.

### 3.2.2 Persistent Absence (<85% attendance)

Where a student has persistent absence for medical reasons, evidence from a medical professional (e.g. GP, CAMHS professional, consultant physician) will be required at least monthly.

If a student's attendance falls below 85%, with at least 10% unauthorised absence over a 5 week period, we will issue a Formal Warning Letter and consider setting up a Parenting Contract. Attendance will be closely monitored over the next four weeks and if it doesn't improve we will liaise with the relevant county to consider initiating the procedure to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice by putting in a request to the Buckinghamshire Council Attendance Team and following their [Code of Conduct](#). Information about the Buckinghamshire Attendance Team can be found [here](#). If the student's attendance fails to improve the County Attendance Team may consider further legal action in accordance with their Code of Conduct.

### 3.2.3 Illness at School

If a student is ill in school, she should report to Matron who will decide whether or not to contact parents. ***Students are not permitted to call parents themselves in this instance. If parents do receive a call from their daughter, they should tell them to go to Matron and then call the school to speak to her directly. Under no circumstances should students be collected from school without our knowledge.***

### 3.2.4 Catching up with work

For absences of a week or less, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with work that she has missed. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, please contact the Year Head who will arrange for work to be sent home.

### 3.2.5 Truancy

Truancy is an absence from school caused by the student's own free will. It will be classed as an unauthorised absence and sanctions will be applied according to our Behaviour and Exclusions Policy, as well as following the protocol set out above. Parents will be informed if a student is found to be truanting. A Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued if the truancy is repeated.

## 3.3 Planned Absences during Term Time

**Please note: For all the following types of planned absence, a [Leave of Absence Form](#) (available online from the 'Parents' section of the website) should be completed by the parent in advance of the absence.**

### 3.3.1 Medical and Dental Appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours whenever possible. If a student *does* have to leave school for an appointment, the appointment should be made at the beginning or end of the day so that not too much school is missed. A [Leave of Absence Form](#) should be completed in advance of the appointment. This type of absence will usually be authorised for part of the day. Whenever a student leaves the school site, **she must sign out at reception to ensure that her absence is taken into account in the event of an emergency.**

### 3.3.2 Pantomimes and Other Licensed Productions

If a student is involved in a production which involves rehearsals and performances during school time, the school will **consider** authorising absence of up to 10 days **as long as the production is licensed**. A [Leave of Absence Form](#) should be completed at least a month in advance. If the student's attendance is below average or the school has significant concerns about the impact this absence would have on her progress, the absence will not be authorised. No such absences will be authorised during the run up to examination periods, or during mock exams.

### **3.3.3 Sporting events**

If students are representing the school in a sporting event, their absence will be authorised. If a student has been asked to take part in a sporting event outside of school, parents must complete a [Leave of Absence Form](#) at least a month in advance.

### **3.3.4 Other Planned Absences**

Requests for a planned day of absence, for example to attend a family ceremony or music examination, should be made **a month in advance on a [Leave of Absence Form](#)**. The student's Year Head will be flexible in cases where such notice is not possible. Where a month's notice has been given, the parent will be notified of the school's decision by email. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- Proximity to examinations
- General welfare and attendance of the student
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student is absent, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may refer and the authority may issue a Penalty Notice. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

### **3.3.5 Holidays**

From 1 September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances, and holidays are not considered exceptional.

All students are expected to be in school on the first day of term. If students do not return to school on the first day after a holiday, school will contact home to discuss the reason why.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is authorised or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

The school reports to parents on their child's attendance record, annually in the student's written report.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes - Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

### 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's [code of conduct](#) for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without authorisation
- Where an excluded student 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for monitoring and promoting attendance

Good attendance is highly valued by the school. A regular part of a form tutor's role is to praise good attendance and punctuality and to speak to students when this falls below our expectations. Tutors will comment on attendance in their tutor reports. Each term, students with attendance over 97% will receive a praise email home.

The Year Head, PSA and Assistant Headteacher monitor absence on a fortnightly basis and discuss any students with attendance below 90%. The SENDCo, Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead and Deputy

Headteacher also meet half termly to review attendance. If a student's absence goes below 90% we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this and to offer support to help them improve the student's attendance. Support could include setting up a contract for the student, offering them support with their learning or friendships or mentoring from our Student Ambassadors or pastoral team. External agencies such as Family Services can be called upon to offer support to families where attendance needs to improve. If a student's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving the County Attendance Team, as detailed in section 3.3.3 above.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis and holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Attendance will be included in the termly safeguarding report.

### 6.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### 6.3 The Pastoral Team (Assistant Head, Year Head and PSA)

- Monitors attendance data at their fortnightly meeting
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 6.4 Form Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on SIMS. Form tutors should also be praising good attendance and questioning poor attendance and punctuality.

### 6.5 Reception and Office staff

Reception and office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Assistant Head. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## 8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour and Exclusions Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy