

**THE SALTERNS ACADEMY TRUST: ADMIRAL LORD NELSON SCHOOL**

**Attendance Policy  
2023-2024**



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<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b>
Governing Body statement	3
Aims	3
Rationale	3
The Benefits of Good Attendance	4
Contacts	4
Recording absence	5
School Responsibilities	5
Leave of Absence Requests	6
Medical or Dental Appointments	6
Irregular Attendance	6
Lateness/Punctuality	7
References	7
Appendices	8
Monitoring	8
Other related policies	8
Appendices:	9
Appendix 1: Attendance and Punctuality Responsibilities	11
Appendix 2: Attendance Matters	

### **Key Staff Involved**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
Executive Headteacher:	C Doherty
Deputy Headteacher: Student Achievement	K Holness
Attendance and behaviour Governor:	J Flynn

The Governing Body will ensure that all effective procedures and protocols are in place to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance and to fulfil their safeguarding duties. Governors recognise the clear link between attendance and the attainment of students.

*United Nations Convention on the rights of the child  
Article 28 – Every child has a right to education*

## **AIMS**

1.1 School attendance is subject to various laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department of Education (DfE) and Portsmouth City Council (PCC).

1.2 DfE Guidance for School Attendance identifies that schools should:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence and lateness
- Ensure every child has access to full time education
- Act early to address patterns of absence and lateness

1.3 ALNS expects parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered with a school attend regularly and on time. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

## **RATIONALE**

2.1 Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%, and this is borne out in statistical analysis of GCSE results at Admiral Lord Nelson School.

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Real Terms</b>	<b>Potential Impact</b>
Above 97%	Less than 6 days absence per year	Excellent attendance – likely to achieve most target grades. Increased chances of college place and ultimately successful employment
95%	10 days absence	Good attendance – students likely to achieve most target grades. Employers see this as acceptable but it does raise questions.
90%	19 days absence	The equates to a month per year and has a significant impact on potential outcomes (nationally and at ALNS students drop by around one GCSE grade if their attendance is below 90%) Colleges and employers see this as an indication of unreliability.
85%	29 days absence	This equates to one half-term per year and has significant impact on potential outcomes – students are highly unlikely to reach their targets. Colleges and employers see this as a strong indication of unreliability which will affect onward destinations on leaving school.
80% and below	If this is the pattern for 5 years a full year has been missed	This will seriously damage any future prospects. It is an indicator of lack of commitment and in addition is rightly viewed through the lens of being a safeguarding concern.

2.2 Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring their child's good attendance but we believe the key to successfully resolving any attendance problems lies in engaging the child through effective case

management and collaborative working between the student, parent, school and Local Authority, ensuring families and the students themselves get the support they need.

## THE BENEFITS OF GOOD ATTENDANCE

3.1 The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work.

Regular attenders:

- Make better progress, both socially and academically
- Find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Find learning more satisfying – any gap in learning due to absence in any year, can lead to poor behaviour and decreased confidence and affect their enjoyment of school – this in turn affects their desire to attend school regularly.
- Are more successful at transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment and training.

Additionally:

- Poor school attendance is closely linked to crime – According to the ONS (May 2022) 52.5% of adults receiving a custodial sentence were persistently absent from school (below 90% attendance).

3.2 Therefore at ALNS we aim to promote good attendance by:

1. Recognising those students who attend regularly (or whose absence is authorised) with house points, certificates etc.
2. Offering a broad and exciting curriculum with engaging lessons, allowing for student choice and responding to student voice feedback.
3. Working closely with parents to ensure their child attends.

3.3 We asks parents/carers to:

- Support the school with your child aiming for 100% attendance and minimal lateness
- Make sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensure they get enough sleep – if they have a broken night's sleep, please consider sending them in the afternoon, they may feel better and it gives them a chance to catch up on the learning.
- Report your child's absence/lateness to the school at the earliest opportunity
- Avoid taking your child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request Leave of Absence in advance and for exceptional circumstances.

3.4 If you are unsure whether your child should be absent from school, the NHS advise you to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are they well enough to take part in school activities?
2. Are they contagious and as such a risk to others?
3. If you had the same condition, would you stay away from work? (if it wouldn't prevent you going to work, they should be going to school).

3.5 Please contact the following staff with any concerns you might have:

Katie Holness	kholness@alns.co.uk	Deputy Headteacher: Student Achievement
Steve Fenner	sfenner@alns.co.uk	Assistant Headteacher: Inclusivity and SENCO
Jon Gray	jgray@alns.co.uk	Head of Warrior House
Tara Smith	tsmith@alns.co.uk	Head of Victory House
Grant Morris	gmorris@alns.co.uk	Head of Spinnaker House
Lukasz Plaza	lplaza@alns.co.uk	Head of Mary Rose House
Emma Kelleher	ekelleher@alns.co.uk	Safeguarding and Attendance Officer
	admin@alns.co.uk	Central admin email address

## **RECORDING ABSENCE**

4.1 The completion of an attendance register is a legal requirement and a child's attendance record may be used as evidence in a court of law. It must, therefore, be maintained accurately.

4.2 Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Therefore, a missed day counts as two sessions of absence.

4.3 Absence is either classified by the school as authorised or unauthorised.

4.4 Authorised absences are sessions missed by a student where there is a good reason for absence like illness or other unavoidable causes which is normally communicated to the school by the parent. This may take the form of a phone call, letter or e-mail.

Authorised absences include:

- Genuine illness (medical evidence must be provided after 5 days)
- Urgent medical treatment
- Religious observance
- School suspension

4.5 Unauthorised absences are those absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents keeping their child off from school unnecessarily, for example to look after siblings, as a birthday treat or to go shopping
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school late arriving after 09:15;
- Students who have already been self-certified ill for 5 days in one term and no medical evidence is provided to support any further illness
- Family Holidays

4.6 All absences are treated as unauthorised unless and until the school receives a satisfactory explanation. Ultimately it is the school's decision if a child's absence/lateness is authorised or not. However, due consideration will be given to the reasons for absence/lateness provided by the parent/carer and the child's historical pattern of attendance/punctuality.

4.7 Parents must provide medical evidence of illness if an absence exceeds 5 days in any given term.

## **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 To encourage high levels of attendance, the school will:

- Regularly review and update the attendance policy as necessary
- Ensure efficient and consistent practice in addressing attendance issues by having clear roles and responsibilities
- Celebrate and reward students who have good and outstanding attendance
- Keep accurate records of attendance
- Engage in local and national strategies that aim to improve attendance
- Notify and inform all parents of their child's attendance through ARBOR and termly progress updates. Parents whose child's attendance is causing concern will also receive e-mail, letters and telephone calls
- Work with appropriate agencies to minimise absence
- Review any requests for absence, taking into account any exceptional circumstances
- Ensure all staff play an active role in the promotion of attendance

- Promote attendance through a planned programme of interventions e.g. allocated time in tutor time, assemblies and student mentoring
- Inform parents and students the link between high levels of attendance with academic success and employability at every opportunity
- Work with parents to achieve the highest levels of attendance
- Consider legal action against parents for a child's poor attendance when other interventions have failed to have any impact.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS:**

6.1 Parents who wish to take their child out of school for any other reason other than illness or medical appointments must complete a 'Leave of Absence Form' (LOAF). Request forms are available from the Parents section of the school website or from the school reception (under the "information letters and forms" tab). Once completed a paper copy must be returned to school reception. Application for leave of absence should be made at least 10 days in advance of the leave to allow the request to be processed.

The Headteacher cannot authorise any time off for holidays unless in exceptional circumstances but it is expected that parents always complete the leave of absence request.

### **MEDICAL OR DENTAL APPOINTMENTS:**

7.1 All appointments must be made outside of school hours whenever possible.

7.2 If this is not possible or in cases of emergencies parents must inform the school of the appointment. Ideally, this will take the form of a note/letter signed and dated by the parent that can be shown to their teacher and to reception staff when they sign out of school.

7.3 Students must first sign out at Reception, showing a note from home, and an official pass will be issued. It is expected that a student will return to school later in the school day following a medical appointment.

### **IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE**

8.1 Portsmouth City Council, in line with the DFE, categorise irregular attendance into two groups – "Persistent absentees" (for attendance which falls below 90%) and "Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeated occasions" (previously referred to as severely absent children - for attendance which falls below 50%). It is important to note that having attendance below 50% (and some Persistent Absenteeism depending on the circumstances) is considered a safeguarding concern and may be referred to appropriate agencies alongside any school action taken to improve attendance.

8.2 When attendance falls below 90% we work hard with the student and parent/carer to get this back on track. This might take the form of telephone calls on the first day of any subsequent absence or a meeting with a tutor or Head of House to establish the reasons for the poor attendance and what support might need to be offered to improve things.

8.3 If there is no improvement, and more than 10 sessions (half days) recorded as unauthorised in a term, the school can request that a Fixed Penalty Notice be served. This may be deemed appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Late arrival to school after the register has closed
- Truancy
- Parentally condoned absences
- Failure of parents to engage, communicate or co-operate with the school
- Term-time holidays

8.4 Each parent of a student with irregular attendance will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued and will be given a period of 30 days to improve. The Fixed Penalty Notice will not be issued if there is no further unauthorised absence from school during the warning period.

8.5 Each case will be considered separately. For example, a Fixed Penalty Notice may not be issued if it would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed, however legal measures will be considered if the family do not require support from any agency to improve attendance or where that support has been refused or unsuccessful.

**Please note, for Term-time holidays taken without school permission, there is no warning period and an immediate Fixed Penalty Notice can be served. This includes circumstances when we have reasonable evidence a holiday took place even if we are not notified of it.**

8.6 We have a legal duty to report the absence of any students who are absent without any explanation for 10 consecutive days. If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the Local Authority is notified that the child is "at risk of missing". Children Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. It is therefore, very important we always have up-to-date contact numbers for all parents.

## **LATENESS/PUNCTUALITY**

9.1 It is important to be on time for the start of all lessons so as not to miss vital learning time and not to cause disruption to the learning of others once the lesson has started. It is reasonable for subject staff to expect students to catch up missed learning at home or in detention.

9.2 Students arriving late to school must sign in at reception to explain their lateness and be registered. The attendance officer will decide if the lateness is authorised or unauthorised, record the attendance mark and the number of minutes missed.

9.3 Persistent lateness to school (10 sessions) can be punishable with a Fixed Penalty Notice, however ALNS will seek to work with families to improve punctuality prior to requesting the Portsmouth City Council issue one.

## **REFERENCES**

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE May 2022 updated Sept 2023)
- Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence – (DfE - February 2022)
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DFE Feb 2023)
- Support for children where mental health is affecting attendance – effective practise examples (DFE Feb 2023)
- School attendance: parental responsibility measures. Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police. (DfE Nov 2013, updated May 2020)
- <https://www.portsmoutheducationpartnership.co.uk/school-attendance>
- Children Missing from Education statutory guidance – (updated September 2016)
- Education Act – 1996 (Sections 444A and 444B) amended by Section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act - 2003
- Portsmouth Code of Conduct in respect of Fixed Penalty Notices (Penalty Notice Protocol) – March 2020

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (DfE effective from Sept 2023)

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – ALNS attendance and punctuality responsibilities.

Appendix 2 – Impact of student absence on attainment

## **MONITORING**

The Policy is reviewed every year by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors.

## **OTHER RELATED POLICIES**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Relationships and Behaviour Systems Policy
- Children Looked After (CLA) Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Headteacher:

- Set attendance targets and monitor progress towards achieving them
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote high levels of attendance

Deputy Headteacher (Student Achievement):

- Set attendance targets and monitor progress towards achieving them
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote high levels of attendance
- Notify parents as appropriate that failure to attend regularly by a student of compulsory age could lead to their legal prosecution
- Working with appropriate staff, initiate strategies to improve attendance
- Report termly to Governors
- Circulate attendance headlines and data to all staff on a weekly basis
- Oversee the attendance arrangements and ensure they are working efficiently
- Ensure regular checks of the registers are made to monitor student absence
- Ensure regular checks of absence communication and ensure unaccounted absences are followed up
- Arrange appropriate training for staff and deal with issues of inadequate registering
- Produce summary data on attendance
- Consider and then proceed with legal interventions including the use of penalty notices
- Contact home where patterns of poor attendance are causing concern
- Deliver assemblies on attendance and plan materials for the tutor programme
- To meet regularly with Heads of House and the safeguarding and attendance team to monitor the effects of the action taken
- Responsible to the Headteacher and Governors for overseeing and coordinating all Procedures
- Ensure Heads of House consistently challenge poor attendance through effective line management
- Offer advice and guidance to a Head of House as necessary
- Provide evidence of impact of strategies to improve levels of attendance to the Headteacher during line management and appraisal process
- Alongside the inclusion manager, lead the work of the Safeguarding and Attendance team to ensure the best possible attendance for all students and that appropriate support is in place for where this is not the case.
- Ensure, by working through all staff (including tutors) that those students not accessing the school site at all receive support to re-engage with the school community and maintain a sense of belonging to Admiral Lord Nelson School. This is likely to include home visits.

Head of House:

- Liaise with Safeguarding and Attendance team on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Lead tutor team in addressing any students with attendance below 95%
- Use ARBOR to track student attendance and punctuality on an ongoing basis and take action as appropriate regarding rewards and sanctions
- To promote high levels of attendance and punctuality, e.g. by leading House assemblies which highlight the importance of good attendance
- When liaising with parents, provide a high level of challenge to parents of students whose patterns of poor attendance are causing concern
- Notify parents as appropriate that a student of compulsory age who fails to attend school regularly could lead to the parent/carer's legal prosecution
- Review Individual Attendance Plans, alongside Safeguarding and Attendance Team, regularly referring cases to the Local Authority either via the Fixed Penalty Protocol or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (as appropriate) if plans are failing
- Ensure lead staff consistently arrange and manage detentions for students who arrive late to school

- Provide evidence of impact of strategies to improve levels of attendance during line management and appraisal process

#### Safeguarding and Attendance team:

- Monitor registers to ensure they are all completed accurately within the legal time frame
- Make first day contact absence calls home to parents
- Produce daily late and Attendance Monitoring Group absence lists and email out to staff
- Gather medical evidence for students' absences from school
- Provide regular data on Attendance Monitoring Group and add/remove students as appropriate
- Inform Heads of House/Tutors of any concerns with regards student absences
- Lead and complete Individual Attendance Plans for students whose attendance falls below 85% (alongside the Senior Inclusion Officers)
- When liaising with parents, provide a high level of challenge to parents of students whose patterns of poor attendance are causing concern
- Review Individual Attendance Plans regularly, referring cases to the Head of House if plans are failing
- Notify parents as appropriate that a student of compulsory age who fails to attend school regularly could lead to the parent/carer's legal prosecution
- Submit Fixed Penalty notice or School Attendance Panel requests as per PCC protocol - follow up as appropriate.
- Act as Lead Professional in those multi-agency meetings where attendance is the significant factor.
- Produce weekly attendance reports on specific cohorts – following guidance from Deputy Headteacher: Student Achievement.
- Regularly run reports on students with absence and send relevant letters home (3 day, 5 day, FPN warning etc)
- Process 'Leave of Absence Forms'

#### Tutors:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Sanction students who arrive late to school or lessons
- Support assemblies and deliver attendance aspects of the tutor programme
- Keep Head of House and safeguarding and Attendance Team advised of suspected truancy advising them of any underlying problems that may account for absence
- Promote good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities (such as during tutor time, assemblies, working towards reward trips), gently addressing patterns of irregular attendance alongside celebrating when things are going well and improving.
- Make contact with parents when attendance patterns begin to become irregular, offer support and liaise with Head of House.

#### Subject staff:

- Staff must meet and greet students on arrival to their lesson, sanctioning those who are late
- Complete an accurate register of attendance of students on ARBOR
- Take action if internal truancy is suspected e.g. emergency call out to notify staff of missing student
- Inform Head of House of any patterns of absence that need challenging
- Promote good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Set work for students to catch up on what they have missed - Google Classroom is used as the mechanism for this, all work being placed on there for each lesson as part of the planning process.

## APPENDIX 2

### Attendance Matters

The Department for Education analysis of students' attendance compared with their achievement shows a clear correlation between attendance and the grades that a student is most likely to achieve.



Attendance	Days at school per year	Chance of achieving 5 or more A* to C grades including English and Mathematics
100%	190	82%
96%	182	74%
93%	177	57%
90%	171	41%
85%	162	29%

If a student is absent for 17 days a year they would have 91% attendance and the impact of this would be that they drop one GCSE grade compared to what they should achieve in each subject.

