Altrincham College

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. Background

Our vision is to nurture well-rounded citizens of the future who are knowledgeable, happy and resilient so that they make a valuable contribution to the world in which they live and are empowered to make informed and positive life choices. At Altrincham College our culture of high expectations, warmth and encouragement aims to create kind individuals who will go out into the world and do what is right. We are committed to ensuring that we develop our young people into confident young adults with a strong sense of social responsibility.

We believe that young people must develop self-discipline and be given opportunities to make the right choices, and in doing so, each pupil will thrive at our school and develop the skills they need to be successful.

2. Principles

At Altrincham College, we aim to foster a culture of excellent behaviour and attendance, removing barriers to learning so that all pupils can achieve outstanding academic outcomes and lead successful, happy lives.

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents\carers and school staff share the responsibility for ensuring that educational opportunities are maximised by encouraging good attendance and punctuality to enable pupils reach their full potential.

We believe that high standards of attendance and punctuality are essential for a successful school and for achieving the school's vision. We also believe that meeting these high standards will have a positive effect on the life of pupils outside of school, encouraging them to become valuable members of the community.

Altrincham College is committed to a positive policy of encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. The school will work in partnership with parents/carers, the Local Authority and other relevant services to secure this aim.

3. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Improve School Attendance 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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- 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.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

5.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

5.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is responsible for:

- Embedding attendance into the **school's vision, strategic plans, and culture**.
- Ensuring all staff understand their role in promoting attendance.
- Leading by example in communicating the importance of attendance to students, staff, and families.
- Monitoring attendance trends across year groups, subjects, and vulnerable cohorts.
- Leading regular reviews of attendance data in SLT meetings and with governors.
- Ensuring interventions are **targeted, timely, and evaluated for impact**.
- Championing collaboration with external agencies (e.g. Early Help, CAMHS, social care).
- Supporting pastoral teams in building **trusting relationships with families**.
- Ensuring staff have the training and resources to address attendance barriers, including safeguarding and SEND.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Hardy and can be contacted via chy@altrinchamcollege.com

5.4 Heads of Year

Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data closely for your year group, identifying patterns and vulnerable students.
- Intervening early with students showing signs of persistent absence or disengagement.
- Working with tutors and subject teachers to ensure consistent messaging and support.
- Communicating regularly and positively with parents/carers about attendance.
- Leading meetings with families to explore barriers and agree on support plans.

- Liaising with pastoral teams, DSL, and external agencies when needed.
- Promoting attendance through assemblies, rewards, and recognition.
- Supporting tutors in delivering attendance messages during form time.
- Ensuring attendance is linked to wider wellbeing, achievement, and aspirations.

5.5 Pastoral Support Managers

Pastoral Managers are responsible for:

- Working closely with students with **persistent or severe absence** to understand underlying issues through EBSNA approaches.
- Developing and implement **individual attendance plans**, including mentoring, check-ins, and referrals to external support.
- Liaising with the DSL, SENDCo, and safeguarding teams to ensure holistic support.
- Acting as a key contact for families facing barriers to attendance, offering **empathetic and practical support**.
- Leading or supporting **Early Help / TTT assessments** and multi-agency meetings.
- Communicating consistently and positively with parents/carers to reinforce the importance of regular attendance.
- Working with Heads of Year, form tutors, and SLT to ensure a **joined-up approach** to attendance.
- Sharing insights and strategies with staff to help them support students effectively.
- Contributing to whole-school attendance initiatives and help evaluate their impact.

5.6 Form Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes in SIMS, and submitting this information to the school office.

Form tutors are responsible for:

- Providing a good example by always being punctual to registration.
- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and on time.
- Keeping the head of year informed of suspected truancy.
- Keeping the head of year informed of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences or poor punctuality.
- Using form time to discuss attendance and punctuality issues, setting and monitoring targets with pupils as appropriate.
- Offering praise to individual students whose attendance and/or punctuality improves.
- Pro-actively supporting strategies in place to encourage good attendance.
- Discussing attendance and punctuality issues with parents/carers and pupils at parents' evenings.
- Monitoring late attendance to form.
- Contacting parents via email on the first day of student absence.

5.7 Subject Teachers

Subject teachers are responsible for:

- Planning lessons that are **stimulating, relevant, and differentiated** to meet diverse needs.
- Using a variety of teaching strategies to keep students motivated and wanting to attend.
- Celebrating effort and progress to build a sense of achievement and belonging.
- Getting to know students and show genuine interest in their wellbeing and learning.
- Being approachable and consistent- students are more likely to attend when they feel **valued and respected**.
- Addressing low-level concerns early, such as disengagement or frequent lateness.
- Taking accurate registers and reporting concerns promptly.
- Following up with students after absences to help them **catch up and feel supported**.
- Liaising with form tutors, pastoral staff, or the DSL if patterns of absence emerge.

5.8 School admin staff

School admin staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transferring calls from parents to the head of year/pastoral support manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Ensuring registers are completed and followed up quickly.
- Contacting parents/carers about unexplained absences, helping reinforce the importance of attendance.
- Consistently engaging in a professional and caring manner with students to make them feel safe and welcome.
- Helping to build trust with families, making them more likely to communicate openly about attendance issues.
- Helping to identify concerns early and passing them on to pastoral or safeguarding teams.
- Reinforcing attendance messages in every interaction, contributing to a unified school culture.

5.9 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:35am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Refrain from taking holidays in term time.

5.10 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time.
- Arrive to school on time.
- Attend school every day in line with government guidelines.

6. Recording attendance

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry.
- The amended entry.
- The reason for the amendment.
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 8:35am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am. The register for the second session will be taken from 12:25pm.

6.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:35am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7). We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

6.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:
- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- Pupils who arrive late 3 times in one half term will receive a C5 detention.

6.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:
- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

6.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports. Parents can also access their child's live attendance record via Classcharts.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

7.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil 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 or withdraw the notice.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will promote good attendance and punctuality in a range of ways which include commendations, letters home, texts, reward trips, prizes and reward points.

- 100% Attendance is celebrated every term with certificates and prizes.
- Achievement points are given for students with 100% attendance and punctuality.
- Forms achieving 100% in any week will be given achievement points.
- Pupils with 100% punctuality in a prize draw for a £10 voucher each term.
- Pupils with 100% Attendance at the end of the year will receive a reward.
- Attendance will be taken into account for Reward Trips and Prom.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance
The school will:
- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Form Tutors/Heads of Year, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and annually by Mrs Hardy, Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes
The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil attending courses at college
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Punctuality Escalation of Intervention

Late	Initial Response	Person Responsible	Appt with
If pupils arrive late to school on 3 occasions	• A C5 Detention will be issued to take place on Monday. • Failure to attend C5 detention will result in isolation the next day until C5 is completed. • Appropriate late mark in the register.	Attendance Admin Heads of Year	
More than 2 detentions per half-term	• Pastoral Manager contact with parent to discuss support.	Pastoral Manager	
3 unauthorised lates per half term	• Letter 1 Letter sent to parent by the Attendance Admin informing them punctuality is a cause for concern.	Attendance Admin	
6 unauthorised lates per half term	• Letter 2, Head of Year meets with parent and pupil.	Head of Year	Head of Year
9 unauthorised lates in a school year	• Letter 3, Head of Year meet with parent and pupil. • **Consideration will be made to apply to the Authority to request a Penalty Notice Warning on 10 unauthorised absences.**	Head of Year	Head of Year
Continued concern	• Senior Leadership Team to consider Panel Meeting. Attendance panel meeting letter. • **Consideration will be made to apply to the Authority to request a Penalty Notice Warning on 10 unauthorised absences.**	Senior Leadership Team Head of Year	Senior Leadership Team Head of Year

Appendix 3: Attendance Escalation of Intervention

