



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Whole School

Reviewed: CW September 2023
Governor Review: October
2023

Introduction and aims

AESG expects its pupils to aim for full attendance and excellent punctuality and is committed to a policy of working with pupils and parents to this end. High standards in these aspects are considered essential in fulfilling the aims of the School, in particular in instilling in the pupils a sense of personal responsibility and reliability and in encouraging the fulfilment of individual academic potential.

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Education and Skills Act 2008;
- Children Act 1989;
- Childcare Act 2006;
- Education (Pupil Registration Regulations) 2006;
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, applies from September 2022);
- Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities (DfE, August 2022);
- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2022);
School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE, May 2020);
- Children missing education (DfE, September 2016);
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017);
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, September 2022);
- Remote education guidance (DfE, March 2022);
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions (DfE, September 2022); and
- SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015).

In addition, the following policies and procedures are relevant to this policy:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

- Missing Pupil Policy
- Behaviour policies (including anti-bullying and the school rules)
- SEND policies
- Risk assessments (Health and Safety, wellbeing plans and assessments for individual pupils)
- Data Retention Policy

Roles and responsibilities

Staff at AESG

Attendance is a school leadership matter. All members of the leadership team work to support families to improve attendance. Day to day responsibility lies with:

- Mrs C Wood – Deputy Head (Pastoral) and DSL (cwood@aesg.co.uk)
- Miss E Scott – Assistant Head Pastoral (Prep) (escott@aesg.co.uk)

We will monitor student attendance and punctuality in registration periods and lessons and liaise closely with parents in the case of unacceptable levels of absence or persistent late arrival to find ways to address these concerns. We will act early to address patterns of absence. We will ensure that we authorise absence for main festivals associated for those with any faith. We will support pupils with illnesses and put measures in place to support those with longer term conditions that may impact on their ability to achieve 100% attendance.

It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to work with parents and pupils to maintain high levels of student attendance. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their compulsory school age child is registered at a school and attends regularly. Failure to do this is an offence under the Education Act 1996. Schools have safeguarding duties under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences.

The Head:

- Is responsible for the strategic oversight of attendance procedures, developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Ensures that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school
- Consider leave of absence requests of up to five days, applying the principles outlined in this policy and ensuring that the absence will not impact on key assessments or events
- Considers parent requests for leave of absence that are more than ten school days
- Notifies parents that, if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, her parents are committing an offence in law

The Deputy Heads/ Asst Head will:

- Oversee attendance arrangements and take responsibility for the updating and operational management of registration and attendance monitoring procedures and implementation of sanctions by Form Tutors and Heads of Year
- Ensure that the school procedures, guidance to staff in the Staff Handbook and the

Attendance Policy comply with current national legislation

- Work with the Admissions officer, Data Manager and Reception team to ensure that the School's Admissions and Attendance registers comply with national legislation and are available for Inspection
- Ensure that attendance and admissions registers are stored for three years
- Keep the Head informed of any issues
- Advise the Head on any strategies that could be initiated, or procedures improved
- Ensure that the procedures are made known to parents via the Parent Handbook/ My School Portal
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- Analyse attendance registers monthly (with relevant staff e.g. Heads of Year) to monitor absence and work with relevant staff to improve attendance
- Ensure that Class Teachers, Form Tutors and Heads of Year are recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality and taking effective action to address individual student concerns
- Work with the Pastoral Team to initiate strategies for improving attendance
- Produce full attendance certificates for individual girls
- Ensure that student attendance is adequate for examination entry
- Contact the Local Education Offices for advice and practical support regarding a pupil who has persistent absence and the family is struggling to meet formal support
- Contact the police when there is an unknown absence and the school and family are unable to establish the whereabouts of a pupil

The Heads of Year (Senior School) / Assistant Head (Prep School) will:

- Ensure that Form Tutors and Class Teachers are following the correct procedures for registration
- Ensure that unaccounted for absence is followed up
- Check weekly iSAMS data sheets on attendance for pupils in their year group/in Prep, identifying pupils whose attendance is a concern: below 90%, is irregular and/ or shows an absence of more than ten consecutive days not covered by a medical certificate – statistical analysis of data
- Make checks on absence notes for such pupils
- Follow up on such concerns with the student and the parent and put in support measures to facilitate an improvement in attendance rates
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and sanctions applied
- Investigate reasons for absence to ensure that there are no issues of bullying, safeguarding, equal opportunities or other issues
- Work with any pupil who has had protracted absence to assist with re-integration
- Inform the Deputy Head if referral to the pupil's LEA is needed (e.g. 10 day's absence child absent from education)
- Determine, in discussion with the Deputy Head whether to authorise any absences that have taken place for which no prior request was made
- Present certificates for full attendance in Assemblies

Class, Form or Subject teachers will:

- Record student attendance, absence and punctuality in every lesson using iSAMS (Senior School) and in the AM and PM (Prep School)
- Alert Reception immediately if a student is absent from the lesson, but has been present in school
- In Senior School, apply sanctions for late arrival, for example making up the time missed during break or lunchtime
- In Senior School, apply sanctions for failure to catch up on work missed through absence after an appropriate timelimit. Appropriate sanctions might include repositioning the student to work alone until work is completed or giving subject detention
- Support pupils who are absent due to illness, enabling them to catch up work and understand the content (via Subject Clinics, one to one mentoring etc.)
- Alert the Form Tutor and Head of Year/Assistant Head (Prep) if absence or poor punctuality are persistent problems
- Record student absence for individual Music tuition using iSAMS as an N if they have not seen the pupil at the start of the lesson

Attendance problems – individual pupils

Heads of Year, Class Teachers or the Assistant Head (Prep) will use some of the following actions to overcome low or irregular attendance:

- Meet with parents to discuss strategies at school and at home to encourage improved attendance
- Arrange learning mentors (older pupils, usually Sixth Form)
- Use letters to parents to discourage absence
- Provide extra help in catching up on work missed
- Provide, in association with the School Nurse and Student Wellbeing Counsellor, in-school counselling
- Work with external agencies to adapt the timetable to enable the pupil to attend school and support with reintegration.

Heads of Key Stage (Prep) or Heads of Department will:

- Ensure that Subject Teachers are recording lesson attendance and punctuality by reviewing registers in department meetings and/or via department reviews
- Oversee staff attendance registers and follow up with individuals if they are not meeting the policy for registration
- Support staff who may have concerns around a pupil's ability to make progress in their learning due to a high absence rate

The Receptionists will:

- Deal with late arrivals. This includes pupils who miss registration for individual tuition in Music, for example
- Produce daily absence lists after 9.30am and e-mail them to the teaching staff
- Inform the Head of Year or Class Teachers of any possible underlying problems that

might account for absences

- Inform the Head of Year or Assistant Head (Prep) if the student has frequent absence, if a single absence is close to tendays or if the absence was for family bereavement, a serious illness or an accident
- Assist in the careful storage and analysis of attendance and punctuality records
- Produce attendance register pdf documents at the end of each month and ensure that they are stored on the system so that they are available for inspection
- Maintain an up-to-date computerised Admissions Register, printed out annually at the end of each school year in July
- Store annual printouts of the Admissions Register for at least three years and make these available for inspection on request.

The Technical Data Administrator will:

- Ensure that the codes available are in line with the DfE guidance ([Working together to improve school attendance, p55-66](#))
- Ensure that any amendment made to the attendance register includes the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment and the date on which the amendment was made
- Back up the electronic admissions register at least once a month. The monthly back-up copies are to be virtually stored for at least three years.

Parents

Parents will be asked, via information in the Parent Handbook and details on My School Portal, to:

- Ensure that their daughter attends school regularly
- Telephone school (Reception team) before 9.00am on the first day of absence and every morning thereafter (by telephone or email) to inform of the reason for absence
- Make non-emergency dental and medical appointments outside school time
- Ensure that their daughter arrives in school no later than 8.35am each day
- Make requests for unavoidable leave of absence in writing to the Head at least ten school days before the requested absence
- Avoid taking holiday absence during term time as well as leaving school early for weekend
- Seek support where their daughter is struggling to attend school – this can be in school or external services and work collaboratively to have a child-focused approach to making an improvement in the attendance rate

Pupils in the Senior School are required to:

- Attend regularly unless ill or absence has been authorised by the School in advance
- Attend registration punctually at 8.40am and 2pm (at the start of Period 5 in the Senior School)
- Sign the late arrivals list if they arrive after the close of registration
- Discuss with their Head of Year and Form Tutor and subject teachers any planned absences at least one week in advance
- Catch up on work missed through absence, normally within a week of return to school

(this can be facilitated via Satchel One).

Maintaining an Attendance Register

The attendance or absence of every pupil included in the school Admission Register must be recorded by the class teacher in the Attendance Register at the commencement of each morning and afternoon session. This is a statutory requirement. Registers must be completed on iSAMS by 8.40am for morning registration and 1.10pm for afternoon registration in the Prep and 2:10pm in Seniors. Staff should record whether the pupil is present, late, absent or attending an approved educational activity.

Pre-compulsory School Attendance Age

In accordance with statutory requirements for EYFS, providers must keep a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises. Staff register the children in Nursery/Pre-School at 8:40am and 1:10pm. The use of the code (+) in iSAMS shows that children below compulsory school age on part-time attendance were not expected for the session. Staff sign the children in to Nursery/Pre-School on a daily basis with a time of arrival and departure noted by the parent/carer.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Procedures for daily registration

- The School will maintain up-to-date registers of attendance
- The School will implement a standardised registration procedure that registers all pupils, including those over compulsory school age, twice daily. The register will be taken at 8.40am and 2pm for Seniors, and at 8:40am and 1:10pm for Prep.
- The registration will be the responsibility of the Form Tutor, Class Teacher or the Cover Tutor if the Form Tutor/Class Teacher is absent / has a Late Morning start. In Prep, the teacher responsible for teaching Period 4 is responsible for the afternoon register.
- Reasons for absence will be categorised by the Form Tutor/Class Teacher as authorised or unauthorised, using standard national codes. (See later sections on authorised and unauthorised absence.)
- Approved educational activities will be classified as attendance, and may be defined as activities which take place away from the school site that are:
 - approved by the Head or Deputy Head
 - supervised by a person or persons approved by the Head
 - either an approved sporting activity or an activity of an educational nature such as work experience, field trips, educational visits and interviews with prospective employers or for a place in Higher Education.
- Form registers will be closed 20 minutes after the start of the morning session.
- Form registers will be closed 10 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.
- Subject Teachers will record attendance and punctuality to all lessons.
- The School will discourage absence for reasons other than genuine illness or family bereavement.
- No absence for holidays will be authorised.

Procedures for pupils arriving late to registration

School procedures for recording late arrivals to registration will be handled initially by the Form Tutor/Class Teacher (if the student arrives before the close of the registration/tutorial period.)

- A student will be marked late in the register if she arrives after the register has been taken at 8.40am but before the close of registration, normally at 9am.
- A student will be marked late in the register if she arrives after the register has been taken at 2pm but before the close of registration at 2.10pm.

After the close of registration, late arrivals will be recorded by the Reception team.

- Pupils are expected to sign the Late Arrivals list at Reception. In Prep, the Reception team will log entry/exit of pupils using the 'Sign in, Sign out' book and amend the registers in iSAMS accordingly.
- Arrivals after 9am will be recorded as U and a letter/ email/ telephone call of explanation will be expected from parents to enable the Reception team to amend the code.

Consequences of late arrival

- The Form Tutor will be responsible for reprimanding the pupils on the first and second occasion of lateness to school.
- The Form Tutor is responsible for informing the Head of Year of pupils who continue to be late without valid transport reasons
- The Head of Year will arrange to send a standard letter to parents and will arrange an appropriate sanction e.g. detention
- Following three sanctions by the Head of Year regarding lateness, the Deputy Head will arrange after-school detentions and will contact the parents by letter or telephone
- Persistent arrival after the attendance register has closed can be construed as irregular

- attendance and the School may therefore contact the Local Education Authority
- Sanctions will not be applied if the lateness is caused by the late arrival of a bus that normally arrives in time for the student to attend registration punctually. It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to check this information with the Reception Team.
 - Subject teachers will apply sanctions for late arrival to lessons.

Absence for individual tuition

Pupils who attend individual Music tuition are permitted to miss one lesson or part of lesson from a particular subject each half term. Absence may also overlap registration. Pupils are expected to ask for permission in advance of the lesson or registration (in Prep, the organisation of Music tuition lessons will be completed by the Peripatetic staff and pupils do not need to seek permission). Pupils who miss registration for this reason should sign in at Reception after the lesson.

Absence procedures

Parents are expected to telephone the school before 9am on the first day of absence to notify the school of the reason for their daughter's absence. If a telephone call has not been received by 9.15am and there is no prior knowledge of the absence, the Reception Team (assisted by administrative staff if necessary) will contact parents by telephone to check that the student is at home ill.

On their daughter's return to school, parents are expected to provide a written explanation of absence, dated and signed. The Form Tutor will decide whether the absence is justified (seeking advice from the Head of Year if necessary) and will enter the appropriate classification code in the electronic register.

Authorised absence

An authorised absence is defined as absence for which the school has given approval in advance of the absence or has accepted a written explanation for absence from parents afterwards. Acceptable reasons for absence would normally be illness or family bereavement. Interviews in Year 11 for FE courses or full-time employment are acceptable if advance notice is given, and a letter of invitation shown.

In the case of VI Form students, the Head of Year will support the students in their applications for employment, additional training, university degrees etc. and will grant all absences as authorised in these instances. We ask that, like younger students, they liaise with their teachers to keep up to date with their work. The School will not grant leave of absence for the student to undertake paid employment.

Absence for exceptional circumstances

Such absence would include travel disruption such as:

- a weather-related emergency, such as snow or flooding
- a natural disaster, such as the impact on air travel of a volcanic eruption
- a health-related emergency, such as restrictions on travel in certain areas e.g. related to a foot and mouth outbreak
- travel disruption caused by the rationing or non-availability of fuel.

It may also include circumstances in which;

- the school site was closed due to unavoidable cause
- a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption which has

prevented the pupil from attending school

Leave of absence for religious observance

In accordance with its equal opportunities policy, the School will permit leave of absence for a family celebration of the main festivals of the religion practised by the student's family. The School expects parents to request such absence well in advance. Pupils may miss important teacher feedback on work previously completed or internal and external assessments, so the School asks parents to limit such absence to a maximum of three days per school year. (Exceptions will be made if important religious festival days exceed this number for a particular religion in a particular year.) Pupils will be expected to catch up on all class work and homework missed, with the support of their teachers in Prep.

Leave of absence for family holidays

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as to the statutory threshold of ten school days. Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances authorised in recent years have included:

- A reconnaissance visit to a country to which the family is considering emigration
- A visit that a single parent is obliged to make as part of her/his work, if it is not possible to make acceptable childcare arrangements with extended family members
- A religious pilgrimage (normally one only)
- A visit abroad to attend a very sick close relative of the student

Applications must be made to the Head, in writing, by the parent with whom the student normally resides. Application must be sent before bookings are made, and at least ten school days before the requested absence. The Head will consult with the Deputy Head and the Head of Year, and will make a decision based on the age of the student; the time of year proposed; the nature of the visit; the assessment calendar and the academic progress and previous attendance record of the student. The School reserves the right to withdraw examination entry of pupils who have unauthorised absences.

Unauthorised absence

If absences have not been covered by a letter from a parent one week after return to school, the Head of Year will arrange for a standard letter to be sent to parents. Pupils who have missed lessons without authorisation will be placed by the Head of Year in after-school detentions until the time missed is made up and work missed has been completed. Parents will always be informed in this case, and normally parents will be asked to discuss the absence with the Deputy Head.

Admissions Register

The School will comply with Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 by:

- Ensuring that the school has an Admissions Register containing an index in alphabetical order of all the pupils at the School.
- Printing out the computerised admissions register annually and storing previous year's records for at least three years.

Including in the Register the following information for each student:

- name in full
- Gender, name and address and telephone number of every parent known to be a parent of a student and a note of who has actual custody (and previous addresses)

- date, month and year of birth, name and address of any school last attended, day, month and year of admission to the School
- the name of the destination school (where relevant) as notified by a parent and the first date of attendance where this is reasonably practicable

A parent is defined as “every natural parent, whether or not he/she is married; any person who has parental responsibility and who has cared for a child even though he/she may not be the natural parent”

A student’s name will only be removed from the Admissions Register if:

- the student has been registered at another school (Registrar to check with the new school)
- the parent has notified the school that the student is receiving education otherwise than at School (Registrar to notify the Local Authority) the student was granted leave of absence of more than ten days and then has failed to attend school within the ten days immediately following, and the Head Mistress is not satisfied that the student is unable to come to school because of illness or other unavoidable cause
- the student fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than ten school days (continuously)
- the student is certified by a medical officer that she is unfit to attend school
- the student has been absent continuously for a period of not less than four weeks, and neither the school nor the LEA, after reasonable enquiry, has been able to locate the student,
- the student has died,
- the student has ceased to be a student of the school,
- the student is in custody for a period of more than four months and does not intend to return to school
- the student has been permanently excluded from the school

The Registrar / Admissions Officer will inform the appropriate Local Authority when a pupil’s name is going to be deleted from the admission register on certain grounds. In summary, these are when the child has been taken out of school to be home educated; when the family has apparently moved away; when the child has been certified as medically unfit to attend; when the child is in custody for more than four months and when the child has been permanently excluded. The School will also notify our own Local Authority when a compulsory school-aged child leaves the School before completing the School’s final year or joins the School after the beginning of the School’s first year.