

ALDE VALLEY ACADEMY



ATTENDANCE POLICY

**SIGNED CHAIR OF COMMITTEE –
DATE MINUTED –20/09/2018 Mr Mayhew**

SIGNED (CHAIR OF GOVERNORS):

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DATE OF REVIEW:- 20/09/2019**

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ALDE VALLEY ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Alde Valley Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Excellent progress depends on excellent attendance.
- 1.2 The whole Academy community / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff, have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's role in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. The Academy will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. Academy's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. All staff (teaching and support) at Alde Valley Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have the responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2. Attendance Lead
A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the Academy's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Lead, will also ensure that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3. Registration
The Academy is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. The Attendance Officer with responsibility for attendance is responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

2.3.1. The register will be called promptly at 8:45 am and 1:45 pm and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

2.3.2. The registers will close at **9.00 am** and **1.50 pm**. Any student who arrive **after** the closing of the register will count as unauthorised **absent (U mark)**. Students who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but late (**L mark**) and will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 4.6 on page 8).

2.4. Categorising absence

2.4.1. A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with Alde Valley Academy

2.4.2. Alde Valley Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children highly vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Alde Valley Academy will therefore challenge parents about the need of reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Academy**.

2.4.3. If **no** explanation about an absence is received by the school the absence will remain unauthorised;

2.4.4. Absence **will** be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example -

- a student is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- in **exceptional** circumstances, such as a funeral or a religious occasion a case can be presented to the Academy where permission may be granted

(b) when the Academy is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend; but when there have been 3 days consecutive illness the school would require medical evidence. This can be either a doctor's appointment card or letter, or a photocopy of a medical prescription.

(c) where the student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her into school beforehand). Evidence must be provided which can be either an appointment card or a medical appointment letter. Only half a day will be authorised for a medical appointment unless there are exceptional circumstances such as an operation. Students leaving to attend a medical appointment or arriving to school after a medical appointment must report to the school office and sign in or out of the school building. **It is important for Health and Safety that all students leaving or arriving follow this procedure.** Students **must** be collected from school by a parent.
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(d) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong;

(e) the student lives more than three miles from school and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;

A reasonable amount of wait time of 30 minutes should students wait for any late bus. If the bus fails to arrive on time the school office should be contacted immediately.

(f) the student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

(g) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

2.4.5. Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the student is staying at home to mind the house;
- the student is shopping during school hours;
- the student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday without permission;
- the student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence;
- the student and parent are not able to attend a re-admittance meeting after an exclusion;
- medical evidence has not been provided if requested;

2.5. Approved Educational Activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Class Registers

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up by the subject teacher and highlighted to the Attendance Lead and the school office. The Attendance Lead will deal with the issue accordingly by notifying parents. If parents are not able to be contacted then the Academy will inform the Police. The Attendance Lead will decide on punitive measures.

2.7 Staff Training

The Academy Attendance Lead will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and analysis of data

3.1 The Attendance Lead will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the Academy target.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and tutor group. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, students with special educational needs, students who are pupil premium and who receive free school meals.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DFE within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Communication

Attendance has a very high profile at Alde Valley Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents and students are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and attendance figures are displayed prominently in school.

4.2 First – day calling

Alde Valley Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be texted and telephoned on the first day a pupil / student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils / students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

4.3 Unexplained Absences

Alde Valley Academy has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences. The Attendance Officer requests explanations for absence. This helps to identify at an early stage students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. If no reason for absence is provided by the parent then the absence will be marked as unauthorised. There will be a following letter if attendance continues to be a concern.

4.4 Pupils attendance percentage

When a students attendance falls to 95% parents will receive a concern letter. When a students attendance falls to 92% parents will receive a letter to advise that for any further absences to be authorised by the Academy medical evidence would have to be provided. This can be either a Doctor appointment card, a letter from the Doctor or a photocopy of a medical prescription.

4.5 Meetings with Parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence with or without explanation, the Academy will write to parents and if required invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans will be put in place with the parents and student to

resolve any difficulties and to improve the attendance. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.6 Referral to the Academy Attendance Lead

If there continues to be unauthorised absences and if a student's attendance falls to below 90% then the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.7 Lateness and Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Students who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3 on page 3) they will be marked absent with a U code (see registration codes on page 4). This absence will be unauthorised unless the Academy is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. Reasons such as; missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or overslept will not be authorised. A student who is persistently absent by reason of a U mark will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence (see para. 4.4).

4.8 Students who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be marked as late. This will immediately result in a break time detention. If they fail to attend the break time detention they will then be issued with a lunchtime detention. If there are further late marks an afterschool detention will be issued and if the poor punctuality continues the senior leadership team will intervene with parents being called for a meeting.

4.9 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late should report to the school office and sign in. **It is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.10 For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day also report to the school office and sign in or out.

4.11 Alde Valley Academy do not permit any student to leave the school site without prior arrangement with the parent. No students are allowed off site.

4.12 Post-Registration Truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Alde Valley Academy takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will notify the parents immediately. If the parents are not contactable then the school will contact the police.

4.13 Penalty Notices

Alde Valley Academy adheres to the Local Authority protocol of issuing penalties in line with the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003. If a student **receives 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence within the academic school year** Suffolk County Council will issue a fixed penalty notice to those who have parental responsibility. This is an instant fine of £60 per child per parent (parents who have parental responsibility). This must be paid within 21 days of the 2nd working day after the date of posting the penalty. If it is not paid within 21 days the fine increases to £120 per pupil per parent. If this is not paid after 28 days of the initial penalty date this will result in parents being prosecuted and legal proceedings against parents will commence in the Magistrates Court. A

penalty will be issued for obtaining unauthorised absences in the following situations:-

- unauthorised absences occurred due to a family holiday which was not authorised by the Academy;
- unauthorised absences have occurred to the student being late to school and the registration period has closed resulting in receiving a U mark – unauthorised late;
- unauthorised absences occurred where a student has not attended school and the school has not been advised of a reason for absence;
- unauthorised absences due to a student has been absent for illness but when requested medical evidence has not been provided;
- when a student has been found out of school during a County Council Education Welfare truancy sweep.

5. Honesty and Transparency

At Alde Valley Academy we encourage honesty and transparency in all that we do and this includes student absence. We have recently had students returning to school after periods of reported sickness telling us about the wonderful time they had on holiday. If the authenticity of illness appears to be in doubt then the school will request parents to provide medical evidence to support the period of absence, otherwise the absence will be unauthorised. Medical evidence can take the form of an appointment card, prescription or a doctor's note. Penalty notice fines will be issued after 6 sessions (3 days) of unauthorised absence over the academic school year in accordance with this policy.

6. From 1st September 2016, all schools in England and Wales are required to inform the local authority when a pupil is added to or removed from the admission register. The school is also required to:
 - Record details of the pupil's residence, the name of the person with whom he/she will reside, the date from which he/she will reside there and the name of the destination school
 - Inform the local authority of the pupil's destination school and the home address if the pupil is moving to a new school
 - Inform their local authority within 5 days of registering a new pupil of his/her address and previous school.

7. Attendance – Alde Valley Academy operates The Fast Track Process

As part of the normal practice:

- Parents should inform the school each day of any absence;
- The school has the responsibility to authorise or unauthorised absence.

Management of an Attendance Case:

- Day 1:**
- Pupil absent -
 - Parent contacts the school
 - Parent contacted by school

Day 4:	Pupil absent due to illness for 3 consecutive days medical evidence needs to be provided.
3 unauthorised Days:	Pupil receives 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence County Council will issue a penalty notice.
Attendance falls to 95%:	Parents will receive a concern letter.
Attendance falls to 92%:	Parents will receive a letter advising that the Academy will not authorise any further absence without medical evidence.
Attendance falls to 90%:	Pupil will be referred to the Academy Attendance Lead through a Fast Track intervention. Case will be assessed in consultation with the Academy and support strategies will be put into place with parents.
Week 6 from Fast Track:	Review date with the Academy Attendance Lead. Attendance and action plan will be reviewed. If the attendance has not improved the case will proceed to court, unless new evidence or mitigation can be provided.

8. Absent Requests

- 7.1. Suffolk County Council issued schools with a penalty notice code of conduct which Alde Valley Academy has decided to adopt, so that if any pupil has 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence then a penalty notice will be issued. (see Para 4.10)
- 7.2. Alde Valley Academy will consider every application individually; its policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence.
- 7.3. All absent requests need to be communicated in advance to the Academy by the parent by completing an Absence Request Form
- 7.4. Alde Valley Academy will consider authorising absence or part of the absence for:
- service personnel who are prevented from taking absence except during term-time;
 - when a family needs to spend time family overseas which has a different significance to a normal absence. Such visits may be important to the pupils identity, religious beliefs and their self-esteem;
 - When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
 - For minority ethnic families
- 7.5. Alde Valley Academy will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.
- 7.6. Alde Valley Academy will **NOT** authorise an absence from school during periods of national tests, i.e. examinations.

7.7. Where absence is granted there will be an expectation that the student undertakes some school-set work during this period. This needs to be requested by the student to all of their teachers.

8. Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities

8.1. The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Alde Valley Academy.

8.2. Alde Valley Academy expects parents / carers will:

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- seek permission from school for any leave of absence;
- to arrange health appointments out of school hours whenever possible and to arrange for your child to attend school prior or after the appointment;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school;
- to provide medical evidence for any absence if requested;

- notify Alde Valley Academy on the first day of absence by a 'phone call and also on subsequently days of absence.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the Academy without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Alde Valley Academy will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

9. Pupils' / Students' Responsibilities

9.1. All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their Learning Support Manager.

9.2. Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Students also have a responsibility for following the Academy's procedures if they arrive late.

9.3. A Guide for students is attached.

9.4. As a student at Alde Valley Academy I will:

- follow the school rules and community code of conduct
- be polite and helpful and respect others' points of view

- attend school regularly, on time and bring all the equipment I need each day
- wear school uniform and be tidy in my appearance
- take advantage of as many of the opportunities that the school offers as I can
- do my classwork and homework as well as I can.

10. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of all students:

Be healthy –

- attendance at school supports children’s emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy

Stay Safe –

- schools have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly

Enjoy and Achieve –

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings

Make a Positive Contribution –

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

Achieve Economic Well-Being –

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style

11. Reviewing the Policy

The school will review this policy each year in conjunction with the Academy Attendance Lead.

APPENDIX 1

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in the Academy?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.45am and the afternoon register at **1.45pm**.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at **9.00am** in the morning and **1.50pm** in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between **8.45am** and **9.00am** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **9.00am** he/she will be marked **absent** for the morning session. This is an unauthorised mark (U Code).

If your child arrives between **1.45pm** and **1.50pm** he/she will be marked **late**.

If your child arrives after **1.50pm** he/she will be marked **absent** for the afternoon session which is again an unauthorised mark (U Code).

(Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office, and sign in. (see para 4.7)

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day and any subsequent days of absence. If you do not contact the school then the absence will be unauthorised. If the illness absence is more than 3 days then medical evidence would need to be provided (see para 2.4) or if your child's attendance is a concern you may of received a letter requesting medical evidence for any days of illness.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Attending an interview for a job, college

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details (see para 2.4).

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, accompanying siblings to a medical appointment, etc.(see para 2.4)

6. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The school will phone you and send a text message if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. (see para 7.4 and 7.5).

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs and GCSE course (Years 10 and 11) examinations.

Parents should complete an absent notification form collected to the front office which will be reviewed by the Attendance Officer, the Attendance Lead and the Principal will make a decision whether the absent will be authorised or unauthorised. Parents will receive a letter advising the Principals decision.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that him /her leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education. Your child will bring home a school planner each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it for the preceding week.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's Learning Support Manager immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem as soon as possible.

APPENDIX 2

ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY

A GUIDE FOR PUPILS / STUDENTS

1. Attending regularly and on time

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Alde Valley Academy. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;
- get a job – employers like people who are reliable.

Remember, your attendance at school is shown in your Progress File and information passed on to your prospective employers or colleges.

2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement
- attending an interview for a job, college, university, etc.

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

Parents must contact the school each day to advise reasons for absence. They will also need to contact the school to explain if you arrive at school after 9.00 am in the morning or 1.50pm in the afternoon. If the explanation is unsatisfactory, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

3. Need help?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. **TALK TO SOMEONE** – a class teacher, form tutor, Learning Support Manager,

another member of staff, or your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.