



ATTENDANCE (FOR LEARNING) POLICY

VISION

Aylesbury Grammar School is highly regarded in the local and national community and we recognise the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality in order that students can maximise their potential in school and that they can be well prepared for the demands of adult life. High **aspiration, respect** and **achievement** are the clear aims of the school and this is directly related to excellent attendance. There must be commitment on behalf of all students, staff, governors and parents to uphold the high standards and values that we expect. Good attendance is implicit in these expectations and is essential in maintaining the orderly environment necessary for effective teaching and learning. Every student should seek to attain maximum attendance and we expect all staff to take the same initiative in supporting good attendance. It is important that students feel recognised for their attendance and the use of praise is encouraged. Since attendance at AGS has been acknowledged as good, it is recognised that the majority of students attend school regularly and that most students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peers and to take part in extracurricular activities. However, if the need arises school policy should be followed as quickly as possible to achieve resolution on the basis that good attendance provides a sound basis for a happy, secure and high achieving school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Home School Agreement**, the **Behaviour for Learning Policy** and the **Pastoral Care Policy**. This policy can be found in the Staff Handbook and on the School website. Information about absence procedures/attendance can also be found in the Parents Handbook and in the students Homework diaries.

PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- We believe excellent attendance and punctuality are a priority in enabling students to make the most of their learning opportunities
- We are committed to regularly conveying this belief to students, staff and parents since excellent attendance and punctuality contribute significantly to a student's chance of fulfilling his academic potential and life chances
- We believe good attendance improves peer relationships, allows students to achieve their social potential and therefore contributes positively to the school community.
- Students, parents, school staff and governors share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Aylesbury Grammar School are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absence are kept to a minimum.
- We will use robust and consistent systems for monitoring attendance/punctuality and we will intervene when individual absence or lateness gives cause for concern using a clear graduated policy
- We will work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued by encouraging, celebrating and rewarding good attendance for students in all year groups
- We will recognise the individual needs of students – for example, those with additional educational needs as well as those students who may become vulnerable through events such as bereavement, divorce and separation and may need additional support at such times.
- The guiding principle of this policy is that every student should attend school every day since every day counts.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LAW

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at that school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence introduced where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend school regularly, fails without reasonable justification to cause him to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444 (1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). It is clear from the law that parents risk prosecution if their child does not attend school regularly. It is important, therefore, for parents and the school to work closely together to overcome any problems which may affect a student's attendance. Since 2014 the DfE have stated that no term time holidays may be granted and therefore requests for term time holiday will **not** be approved. If holiday leave is taken during term time this will be viewed as undermining the good order and discipline of the school and sanctions may be applied.

The school will work with the Education Welfare Service where attendance or punctuality does not meet the school's expectations. An Education Welfare Officer may visit the school to support regular school attendance and to help remove any barriers which may be preventing a student from accessing the education to which he is entitled.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the following appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Expectations of stakeholders
- Appendix 2 - Procedures relating to Registration and Absence
- Appendix 3 - Rewards and Sanctions
- Appendix 4 - Advance application for Leave of Absence Form and guide to completing the Form
- Appendix 5 - Sample Letters

APPENDIX 1: EXPECTATIONS

We expect that all our **students** will:

- Arrive on time for registration and for all lessons
- Sign in promptly at the School Office if unavoidably late
- Sign out with permission from school for acceptable reasons
- Ensure absence notes are delivered to the School Office and placed in the appropriate tray
- Speak to the Tutor or Head of Year if there is a problem which prevents regular good attendance

We expect that **parents/guardians** will:

- Ensure that their sons attend school regularly and are punctual
- Provide an alternative means of transport to school if the School Bus fails to arrive under reasonable weather conditions
- Telephone the school on the first and subsequent days of absence to inform the school of their son's absence
- Provide a written explanation of their son's absence on his return to school, unless a phone call has been made to the school on each day of absence
- Request permission from the school in advance for a student to attend an unavoidable appointment (ie medical, driving tests, music exams)
- Refrain from taking their sons on holiday during term time
- Apply for us to consider any leave of absence from school using the appropriate proforma (exceptional circumstances only)

Aylesbury Grammar School will:

- Write, implement and communicate an Attendance for Learning Policy
- Monitor and review the Attendance for Learning Policy every three years
- Set and monitor attendance targets and report these to Governors
- Implement the systems of rewards and sanctions for attendance
- Ensure good attendance and punctuality are central to the school ethos and are given a high profile at assemblies, school events and in the Newsletter

Specific roles and responsibilities of school staff

The **Attendance Officer** will:

- Check and ensure that all registers are completed every morning and afternoon
- Inform the member of SLT with responsibility for attendance of any registers that have not been completed
- Provide regular attendance data to SLT, Heads of Year and Tutors
- Monitor the attendance of vulnerable students or those for whom attendance is a significant concern
- Ensure that parents are contacted on a regular basis with any absences that remain unexplained at the end of each month

The **Tutor** will:

- Be a good role model for students by arriving punctually for registration
- Remind students of the need for good attendance and punctuality
- Keep an accurate and prompt register
- Praise students for good attendance and punctuality
- Inform the Head of Year, via a yellow referral, if they become concerned about a student's absence or punctuality

Academic teachers will:

- Be good role models for students by arriving punctually for lessons
- Remind students of the link between good attendance/punctuality and attainment
- Record attendance to lessons accurately and check for internal truancy
- Follow up lateness to lessons in line with School Behaviour Policy
- Inform the Head of Year, via a yellow referral, if they become concerned about a student's absence or punctuality

The **Heads of Year** will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within his/her own Year group
- Ensure all Tutors are familiar with and apply the policy consistently
- Monitor attendance and punctuality in the year group, using the data supplied by the Attendance Officer
- Follow up concerns expressed by tutors/academic staff about a student's absence or punctuality
- Support the school by helping to implement rewards and sanctions for truancy and poor punctuality

- Contact parents to discuss concerns about attendance and punctuality
- Inform and discuss with the Head of Section concerns about attendance and punctuality
- Inform and discuss any serious concerns with the Deputy Head responsible for attendance
- Work with other appropriate agencies (EWO) to improve attendance and punctuality
- Arrange for work to be provided for excluded students and long term absentees
- Consider applications for leave of absence of up to one day in length

The **Head of Section** will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within his/her own Section
- Ensure the Heads of Year in their section are familiar with and apply the policy consistently
- Monitor attendance and punctuality in the Section, in conjunction with the Year Leaders
- Support the Heads of Year in working with the student, parents and other agencies to improve attendance
- Liaise with the SLT member responsible for attendance over issues of attendance and punctuality
- Consider applications for leave of absence for up to two days in length

The **SENCO** will:

- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of all SEN students for whom absence and punctuality is a concern
- Support the Heads of Year in working with students with SEN who have poor attendance
- Liaise with Heads of Year regarding strategies for improving attendance of students with SEN

The **Member of SLT responsible for Attendance** will:

- Lead the work of the Attendance and Behaviour Working Parties in developing, implementing and reviewing the Attendance for Learning Policy
- Set annual targets for improving attendance and report these to the Head Master and the Governors
- Monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the whole school
- Support the work of the Attendance Officer by following up any registers that are not completed
- Support the work of the Heads of Section and Heads of Year in monitoring absence/attendance and implementing rewards and sanctions

The **Education Welfare Officer**, if requested, will:

- Meet with the Attendance Officer to monitor attendance and punctuality
- Meet with relevant Heads of Year/SLT member in charge of attendance to discuss strategies to support improved attendance in identified students
- Work with identified students/parents, and the school, to resolve issues of poor attendance and punctuality
- If necessary, refer matters of poor attendance to other authorities that may instigate legal proceedings to improve a student's attendance

The **Head Master** will:

- Review and agree the Attendance for Learning Policy
- Agree and monitor annual attendance targets with the member of SLT responsible for Attendance
- Support the member of SLT responsible for achieving the attendance targets
- Consider applications for leave of absence of over two days of length

The **Governors** will:

- Review and agree the Attendance for Learning Policy at the Learning and Teaching Committee
- Review and monitor annual attendance targets

APPENDIX 2: PROCEDURES RELATING TO ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

1. A formal electronic register must be taken daily at the start of the morning session (8.40 – 8.50 am) and at the start of period 5 (between 2.35 – 2.50 pm) in the afternoon. It is a legal requirement to register students twice a day and teachers must ensure that it is taken accurately. A class register must also be taken every lesson, preferably electronically.
2. If a student arrives late but the register is still open (up until 9.30 am and 3.00 pm) he will get a late mark. If a student arrives after the register is closed he will be marked as absent and will require a reason for this absence from his parents or other agreed person (ie Head of Year)
3. A student who arrives late and misses registration must report to the School Office and sign in promptly. Lateness will be monitored and will be followed up according Appendix 1.
4. Students should not leave school without permission. Students who need to leave school during the day (ie for an unavoidable medical appointment) should sign out, with prior written agreement, at the School Office. If the student then returns to school within the same day, he must sign back into school at the School Office.
5. If any student, including a Sixth Form student, becomes unwell during the school day, he must see Matron who will decide whether it is appropriate to contact their parent/carer and ask for him to be collected. Students should never phone home and ask to be taken home without agreement from Matron. Matron may decide, in conjunction with Sixth Form Pastoral staff, that a Sixth Form student may be sent home even if it has not been possible to contact parents.
6. Parents/carers should contact the school by phone, via the School Office, on the first morning of a student's absence (preferably before 9.30 am) and each subsequent day of absence. Parents should inform the school if the absence is likely to be for longer than three consecutive days. When the student returns to school, a letter should be provided to explain the absence unless a parent has phoned the school for each day of absence or has emailed the School Office. The letter should be placed in the tray in the School Office.
7. Absences will only be authorised if parents/carers have informed the school of the reasons for the absence or if authorised by the Head of Year, Head of Section or Headmaster.
8. **If a parent/student knows about an intended absence in advance an Absence Request form must be completed with as much notice as possible IN ADVANCE of the absence. Please see the guidelines for the completion of the Absence Request form for notice required. These forms are available from the School Office and can be downloaded from the School Website.**
9. Students whose attendance in Years 7-11 falls below 90% will be monitored by the Head of Year. For Sixth Form the percentage attendance will exclude Home Study.
10. Students whose attendance in Years 7 -11 falls below 85% will be monitored by the Head of Year but will also have been discussed with the parents and Head of Section.
11. Students whose attendance in Years 7 -11 falls below 80% (or who continues to make no improvements with progress) will be monitored by the Head of Year and the member of SLT in charge of attendance.
12. If attendance continues to cause concern, or there is no good reason for the absence, the SLT member in charge of attendance will ask for support from the EWO.

APPENDIX 3: REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

This document acts as a guide to staff, students and parents of the rewards, procedures and sanctions available at the school, relating to attendance and punctuality. The value of informal, verbal praise and recognition should not be underestimated by staff, students and parents.

Rewards

	Reward	Can be given by?	Frequency
Consistent high levels of attendance or improvement in attendance at registration	Verbal praise and recognition	Tutor, HOY, HOS	Often – every week
Consistent punctuality to registration or improvement in punctuality to registration	Verbal praise and recognition	Tutor, HOY, HOS	Often – every week
Consistently excellent level of attendance, punctuality or significant improvement in punctuality and attendance (registration)	Merit mark or Praise Postcard	As above	Every term, where appropriate
Consistent levels of punctuality to lessons	Verbal Praise and recognition	Any teacher	Often – every week
100% Attendance in a term	Attendance Praise Postcard sent home	HOY/HOS – sent by office	Once per term
100% Attendance in a term	Name entered in end of term Prize Draw	HOY/HOS	Once per term

Procedures and Sanctions for poor attendance and punctuality

Sanctions

	Sanction	Can be given by?	Frequency
Lateness to registration	Verbal warning	Tutor	As needed
Persistent lateness to registration and lessons (after verbal admonishment)	Yellow Referral to HOY	Tutor/Teacher	As needed
As above	Discussion with student and/or parent. A School detention may be issued or a student may be placed on Attendance Report or required to sign in with HOY.	HOY	
Truancy from lessons or from the school day	As above and/or Detention, Merit Holiday or Internal Exclusion – depending on the severity of the truancy.	HOY, in discussion with HOS and parents	Rarely (VERY rare in Years 7 -9)

Procedures for supporting good attendance

Stage	Action	Person responsible
1	Every 5 weeks identify students whose attendance is below 90%, without valid or consistent reasons. Alert Tutor/HOY depending on level of absence	Attendance Officer
2	If attendance level between 85 - 90%, Tutor to monitor attendance, talk informally to student and encourage improvement. Pass relevant information to HOY. If improvement occurs, acknowledge and praise.	Data passed to Tutor by Attendance Officer/HOY
3	If attendance level falls to between 80 - 85%, HOY to intervene if necessary and talk to student and parents. If appropriate a letter should be sent home alerting parents to concern in writing. HOY to monitor. If improvement occurs, acknowledge and praise.	HOY
4	If attendance levels fall consistently below 80% and/or HOY is concerned about attendance, parents should be contacted again and should refer to HOS. Attendance should be carefully monitored for improvement/deterioration.	HOY/HOS
5	If attendance does not improve, and there is no good reason for poor attendance, referral to SLT in charge of attendance and Attendance Action Plan to be drawn up in conjunction with parents.	SLT in charge of attendance
6	If attendance does not improve the SLT member will request support from the EWO and the EWO will take on the referral and work with family and the school to improve student's attendance	EWO
7	Referral to LA Enforcement team if casework or other intervention strategies prove unsuccessful or if the EWO deems it may bring about an improvement in the student's attendance.	EWO
	NB In the case of a Sixth Form student points 5 and 6 do not apply but further discussion between HOY, HOS, the student and parents, about a student's future in the school should follow.	