



Altmore & Lathom Schools Federation

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Moments count, attendance matters...

The Federation is committed to meeting statutory obligations in regard to school attendance holds the highest expectations regarding attendance and punctuality. We aim for 100% attendance and zero lates for every child, understanding that excellent attendance at school supports excellent outcomes and reinforces our ethos and values.

Aims

As a school we aim to:

- Promote good attendance, by maintaining parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled, supporting achievement
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promote, improve and support punctuality
- Celebrate good attendance

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996 \(part 6\)](#)
- [The Education Act 2002 \(part 3\)](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(part 7\)](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 20226 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School Census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to the different phases of their learning

Roles and responsibilities

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

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

The **Designated senior leader** is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The school **attendance officer** is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to staff and reporting concerns about to the designated senior leader
- Working with our AMWA (Attendance Management Welfare Adviser) to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices

School **Office staff** will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence 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
- Arrange medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Bring their child to school before and return them after a hospital or other medical appointment

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Measures taken in order to safeguard children:

- Following-up unexplained absences after registration, with a phone call on the first morning
- Reminding parents of the importance of regular attendance & punctuality (via: face-to-face, online, letters, etc.)
- Publishing attendance rates in the school prospectus and the Governing Board's School Profile
- Acknowledging and rewarding good attendance in weekly assemblies
- Publishing pupil's attendance on their annual school report
- Letting parents know if we have concerns regarding their child's attendance
- If concerns continue, make a referral to the AMWA, who visits the school weekly to review and support attendance

Recording attendance

There is an **attendance register**, all pupils will be placed onto this register. The attendance register will be taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session.

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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made

At **Lathom** Junior School, pupils must be in their classrooms by **08:45**

At **Altmore** Infant School, pupils must be in their classrooms by **09:00**

Authorised/Planned Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a pupil is ill; there is a family bereavement; for religious observance, etc.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as a pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, parents/carers are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, a pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Unauthorised/Unplanned Absence

There are times when pupils are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping-in after a late night
- Going shopping, or for a hair cut
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Unapproved Holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- Parents are unwell (*call us, we can help to get your child to school*)

Supporting such absences is against our school ethos

Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

Lateness and Punctuality

- At Lathom gates open at 08:30 every morning except on Mondays, on Mondays gates open at 08:45
- At Altmere gates open at 08:45/12:30 for Nursery children and 08:50 for Year R and KS1
- Pupils are marked late if they arrive after the gates have closed and come into school via the Office where they record their reason for lateness
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day
- If pupils miss this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for pupils
- Lateness is monitored regularly; where pupils have persistent lateness problems parents will be invited to a formal meeting with the Attendance officer
- Pupils who are not picked-up on time at the end of the school day will join our After School provisions; staff will try to contact parents, or those listed as second/emergency contacts
- After School childcare is provided (at a cost) until 18:30

We take the view there are no late children, only late parents

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. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the AMWA and making a referral to the Attendance Management Service
- A home visit will also be conducted

Holidays and Term Time Leave of Absence

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time.

It is our policy:

- That only in exceptional circumstances will leave be allowed and then only up to a maximum of two weeks. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application).
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term-time need to fill-in an application form well in advance and before booking. Please ask the school office for a form; the Headteacher will consider your request and advise you of their decision, (possibly asking to meet with you to discuss) further time than allowed will be unauthorised.
- No leave requests will be granted for children in Year 2 and Year 6 during their SATs. Notification of the date will be given to parents as early as possible in the academic year.
- If the school does not agree and a pupil is taken out of school, the absence will be unauthorised

Legal sanctions/Penalty Notices

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices are issued by the local authority.

Penalty Notices:

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996; where a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences and/or one-off instances of irregular attendance such as leave/holidays taken during term time without the school's authorisation, the Governing Board has authorised the issuing of Penalty Notices on a case-by-case basis.

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch-up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when a pupil is in the classroom.

School visits and residentials

Opportunities for pupils to attend these activities are provided. If they do not go, they **are expected to be in school**, where alternative arrangements will be made for them.

Governors and the school **will not authorise** absence if a pupil does not attend school during this time, unless there is a valid medical reason or medical certificate provided or there are exceptional family circumstances.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly and, at an individual pupil level
- 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
- Keep parents informed throughout the year in regard to attendance expectations through newsletters, reminders on our websites and online platforms
- Celebrate pupils' good attendance throughout the academic year, award certificates to pupils with 100% attendance in assemblies
- Award trophies to classes with the highest attendance percentage and punctuality on a weekly basis

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/carers 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

Procedures and Protocols

- All updated DfE guidance and procedures are followed in terms of notification to the LA of CME, CMO, Verified and Unverified Leavers, and removal from school admissions register
- Registers (electronic and paper format) are monitored by the attendance team on a daily basis
- Senior leaders monitor registers on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to identify potential trends
- A log is kept of children who arrive late
- A log is kept of all children for whom no notification for absence has been made and of phone calls made to families/contacts
- A log is kept of phone calls received from parents and reasons given for an absence

Policy Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually and as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy

Legal Note

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- *The school may ask the Council to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 20 days it rises to £120 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days. If not paid at all, court action is likely to be initiated.*
- *The school may ask the Council to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even up to 3 months imprisonment.*
- *In some cases, action may be taken under the [Children Act 1989](#) to protect the welfare and educational development of the child.*

Don't forget: **Every day counts!**