

# ALT BRIDGE SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy



# **Alt Bridge School Attendance Policy**

## **Aims of the Policy**

Alt Bridge School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupils to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

Good attendance is essential if students are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills they will need and reach their full potential.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which pupils, staff and parents can work in partnership.

The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention when a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and work closely with families to encourage good attendance.

The school will encourage good attendance among pupils through a system of rewards.

The school Governors will monitor attendance closely and work with the Deputy Headteacher on attendance issues.

By trying to improve attendance as a school we can effectively work towards meeting the outcomes of Every Child Matters for all the pupils.

The Knowsley Borough Stage 5 Procedures (Appendix A) outline clearly the role of the school.

The School Attendance Service has assigned a School Attendance Improvement Officer (SAIO) to Alt Bridge. The SAIO will liaise with Alt Bridge on and attend consultation meeting with the Deputy Headteacher over all matters of attendance, punctuality and pupils' welfare.

## **Why regular attendance is so important**

Everyone in the school community needs to be aware of the result of poor attendance on pupils enjoying and achieving.

Poor attendance can lower a child's confidence, self esteem, security at school and their academic success.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

**Alt Bridge School will work together with parents and the Local Authority to improve attendance so we can all help all children to achieve their full potential.**

***Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.***

This policy is available on the school website.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all focus on this we will:

- Liaises closely with the SAIO to raise the profile of attendance.
- Use school attendance diaries are used periodically for Key Stage 3 pupils.
- Pupils at Key Stage 4 are encouraged using a more age appropriate system of reward cards.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Weekly celebration Assembly prizes for Year group with the highest attendance.
- Termly certificates celebrating 100% attendance.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outing/events
- Annual raffle for 100% attendance.

### **Registering and Monitoring Attendance**

All registers are marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions in school. This is the first task teachers do in the morning and afternoon.

The school will monitor attendance on a daily basis and once a week analyse attendance records.

The registers are recorded electronically and the system is able to give us an instant analysis of attendance and punctuality. This will be looked at by the Deputy Headteacher and staff in the school.

At the end of the academic year parents will be given a copy of their child's attendance record for the year. The Deputy Head will also share the attendance record with parents throughout the year if there are any concerns.

Attendance will be discussed at Governing Body meetings.

### **Lateness**

The school policy is to encourage punctuality but actively discourage lateness as it seriously disrupts lessons, can be embarrassing for the pupils and can also encourage absence. If a child is late and misses registration a late mark will be recorded. Obviously the school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. Pupils who arrive late after registration has closed must sign in using the Inventory Signing in System, located in reception.

### **How we manage lateness**

Registers are marked by 9.15 a.m. and 1.25 p.m and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time for each session.

The attendance register closes at 9.30 a.m. for the morning session and 1.30 p.m for the afternoon session. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but these will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with Deputy Headteacher or an Assistant Headteacher to resolve the problem.

If a youngster is late more than twice in one week a letter will be sent home unless the school is aware of any exceptional circumstances.

All letters concerning punctuality and attendance will be copied to the child's file.

If a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Deputy Headteacher.

### **Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half – day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required in writing.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199, Education Act 1993).

- **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** – if the school is satisfied that a pupils of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents or on production of an appointment card. The school would ask parents to try and make dental appointments outside school hours.
- **Exceptional leave/holidays** – The Governors **will not** be granting any holiday leave during term time. Holidays taken during term time will be marked as **unauthorised**.
- **Family Bereavements** - The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person’s life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

**If a child is sick on either side of a holiday the school may request medical evidence to show the child has been ill. This evidence may be a medical appointment card from the doctors.**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to the LA using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping youngsters off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Others

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

- Retaining open & honest communication with school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging positive friendships in school.

## **Absence Procedure for Parents/Carers**

### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note into school, e-mail, or a parent app message on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- A member of staff will visit home to ensure that our safeguarding policy is being fulfilled.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Deputy Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the LA if attendance moves below 90%

The school will always support parents who have difficulty with writing letters.

If the parents do not inform the school about their child's absence the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

## **Absence Procedure for Staff**

By adhering to the following procedure, staff will know at a glance the position of a pupil who is absent and there should be continuity in the actions taken by the Form Teachers within the school.

- Absence Report Log should be kept in each register.
- Messages taken by telephone or notes received are to be entered on the Absence Log (kept in registers) and input on to the sims.net management system.
- System of first day calling is in operation, implemented by SSA'S attached to form groups and monitored by Form Tutors.
- After 3 days of absence (and if no explanation has been offered), in order to prevent absenteeism (defined as 90%) the Form Teacher is to complete an absence letter and pass it into the office for posting. (These forms can be found in the staff room and school office)
- After a maximum of 8 days absence and no reply to the Absence Letter being received – an SAIO Register Referral – should be completed and passed to

the D.H.T. These forms are also found in the staff room.

- Any follow-up to be done by the SAIO will be recorded on the bottom of the referral form and returned to the Form Teacher and Heads of School.
- Attendance is a regular item on fortnightly staff meeting agendas.
- After consultation between the school and the SAIO, a joint decision will be made regarding action; this will be relevant to the appropriate Stage. This may be in form of letters, visits, or casework. Stage 5 represents action through the courts.
- In accordance with the L.A. procedure, any pupil who is on Child Protection Register will be referred to Social Services upon **THE FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE** and to the SAIO if appropriate.

### **Leave during term time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in schools time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost of your child's education.

In line with Department for Education guidelines, there is **no** entitlement to time off in school time to go on holiday. **Holidays taken during term time will be marked as unauthorised.**

The Deputy Head will be monitoring the registers and will be looking at all unauthorised absences.

*Information about any parents who take unauthorised holidays for their children will be passed on to the Participation Team who may issue each parent with a Penalty Notice for each child. The amount of each Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the notice(s) remains unpaid you will be summoned to the Magistrates court and could be fined up to £2,500 for each matter.*

*Where parents/Carers that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices then take their child/ren out of school again without authorisation from the Headteacher – further Penalty Notices may not be issued. In these cases, the matter will be referred to the Participation Team for each parent/carer to be summonsed the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A), Education Act 1996*

**“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence”**

If a child's attendance falls below 90% and there are concerns a letter will be sent from the school to inform the parents and they will be invited to contact the Deputy Headteacher to discuss their child's attendance.

This child's attendance will also be monitored closely on a weekly basis.

If the school has continued concern regarding the child's attendance after speaking to the parents the school will inform the LA of their concerns.

With effect from September 2017 those families referred to the Deputy Head may be involved in the Attendance Panel System which involves the school taking early intervention when there is an area of concern regarding a child's attendance.

During this process, Parents are informed of improvement that needs to be made over a specific time frame. Where parents fail to take their responsibilities seriously or no improvement is brought about in the child's attendance within a specific time frame, prosecution proceedings will be initiated.

The attendance of those children involved in the Attendance Panel system will be monitored very closely.

### **Persistent absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Particular notice is taken of Children Looked After, Children Missing from School and other vulnerable groups such as Refugee and Asylum Seekers.

### **Missing Children**

It is the duty of all who work in the education service to secure the safety of children in their charge.

If the school has concerns about a child who is missing they will report their concerns to the relevant agencies.

### **Telephone Numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about different things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular reminders on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **Summary**

Alt Bridge has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its Attendance Policy to parents in order to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & Department for Education; equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.



All school staff is committed to working with parents and children as the best way to ensure as high level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

This Policy will be reviewed annually or if there are any changes concerning pupil's attendance.

This policy, Attendance should be read in conjunction with the following policies:-

- Allegations Management
- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Disability Equality Duty Scheme
- Equality Scheme (including Race & Gender)
- Exclusions
- Internet & E-Safety
- PHSE (including Drug Prevention)
- Positive Handling
- Safer Recruitment
- Visits and School Trips

## **KNOWSLEY BOROUGH 5 STAGE PROCEDURES**

### **THE FIVE STAGES OF CONCERN OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

#### **STAGE 1**

##### When absences start to occur

School will contact you by phone or letter for a reason

#### **STAGE 2**

##### When Absences continue

School may interview your child and monitor progress more closely, together with letters and phone calls. School may ask you to come in for a meeting.

#### **STAGE 3**

##### When the situation does not improve

School talks to the School Attendance Service within the LA and an officer will visit you and make an assessment. This visit may also be regarding punctuality.

#### **STAGE 4**

##### When stages 1 – 3 have not brought about an improvement

At this stage any further absences will not be authorised by school. The LA School Attendance Officer will case work with you for 6 weeks to support you in improving your child's attendance. This can include home visits, meetings, phone calls, referrals etc.

#### **STAGE 5**

##### When no improvement occurs despite all of the above

The case will be transferred to the school Attendance Improvement Officer for possible prosecution. This could mean a fine or imprisonment resulting in a criminal record for the parent.