



ALEC REED ACADEMY
PROUD TO LEARN

Attendance Policy

All Through

Policy Owner:	Helen Tinsley / Taniya Ahmed	Approved By:	Board of Trustees
Target Audience:	Parents and pupils	Requirement to Publish on Website:	Yes
Purpose:	To support schools, parents, and pupils to maintain high levels of school attendance	Statutory Policy:	No
Review Date:	July 2026	Approval Date:	July 2024

1. Introduction

This policy outlines statutory and school expectations and requirements in relation to school attendance and punctuality.

The policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with pupils, parents and trustees.
The next review date will be in July 2024.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the policy are to ensure that:

- all pupils achieve their full academic potential through regular attendance at school;
- pupils, parents and staff work in partnership to ensure regular pupil attendance;
- pupils are punctual to school and to lessons throughout the school day;
- pupils are safe and accounted for at school;
- pupils with attendance difficulties are supported and helped to improve their attendance;
- all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities in relation to attendance processes and procedures.

Good attendance and punctuality is important because:

- Evidence shows a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance and punctuality
- Regular and punctual attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular and punctual attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular and punctual attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular and punctual attendance encourages responsible learning habits and prepares young people for higher education and for their working life.

1.2 Legal responsibilities

Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school. Supreme Court ruling, April 2017

Regular attendance at Alec Reed Academy is considered to be attendance on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent; (Registration Regulations 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996).

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

Parents have a legal duty to ensure efficient and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils of statutory school age (Education Act 1996). This is the legal requirement. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty fine.

1.3 Registration Primary Timings

08:15 – 08:30	Doors open 'soft start'
08:25 – 08:30	Registration
08:30 – 09:00	Pupils to be brought to the office and marked as late (L)
12:45 – onwards	Pupils collected after this point will receive their afternoon mark
15:00	End of school day

It is the responsibility of all parents to notify the school on the first day of a period of absence. This is to ensure that our pupils are kept safe and the school knows the reason for their absence. Parents must inform the Primary attendance officer and explain the reason of their child's absence by telephone or email by 8:30am on the morning of the absence.

The school's email address for reporting absences is:

PrimaryAttendance@alecreedacademy.co.uk

Parents can speak to the attendance officer and leave messages on the school's attendance line: 0208 88414511

High School Timings

7.30 – 08:40	Doors open
08:40 – 09:00	Registration
08:40 onwards	Pupils who are late sign in through main reception
12:15 – onwards	Pupils collected after this point will receive their afternoon mark
15.00	End of school day years 7-10
16.00	End of school day for year 11

It is the responsibility of all parents to notify the school on the first day of a period of absence. This is to ensure that our pupils are kept safe, and the school knows the reason for their absence. Parents must inform the High School attendance officer or their child's SaFE Worker and explain the reason for their child's absence by telephone or email by 8:30am on the morning of the absence.

Parents can speak to the attendance officer and leave messages using the academy's main number and selecting the appropriate options: 0208 88414511 or by e-mailing the academy attendance officer SecondaryAttendance@alecreedacademy.co.uk

2. Responsibilities

2.1 As a parent you can support regular attendance by:

- Ensuring your child attends school on each day the school is open for pupils unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent. Only the school can authorise an absence.
- Telephoning the school with a reason for an absence on each day of absence.
Absence should only happen
 - a) When your child is significantly/symptomatically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be an observable symptom; 'feeling unwell' is not enough. We may ask for medical verification where absence claimed as illness is frequent, prolonged or where there are absences before or after a school holiday. Please see Covid addendum in section 3.
 - b) Let us know If there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty
 - c) If your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance, please let us know.
- Giving a timely reason; satisfactory to the school; otherwise, the absence will remain unauthorised
- Arranging all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Keeping the school updated by telephone, email or letter of any changes of circumstances. Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers and emergency contact details.
- **If you are leaving** the area or changing schools, please complete a **leaver's form** (available at the school office/primary reception). Schools and the local authority are obliged to track pupils missing from school. This can be intrusive in the absence of reliable or confirmed information.
- If you require more detailed support on attendance, please contact the Primary attendance officer – PrimaryAttendance@alecreedacademy.co.uk for the Primary phase and Education Welfare Officer – EWO@alecreedacademy.co.uk

2.2 Alec Reed Academy will:

- Celebrate good attendance and punctuality through our rewards processes for example rewards assemblies, certificates, positive contact home, challenges etc. for both individual pupils and groups.
- Monitor daily attendance and follow up unexplained absences/unauthorised absences using a range of appropriate methods such as daily text messages, emails, phone calls, home visits, working with external services etc.
- Publish our attendance data and set annual targets which will be communicated with and monitored by our governing body.
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality. The school will express '**a concern**' either verbally or by letter. If attendance does not improve or explanations for absence are unsatisfactory you may be invited to a meeting. The school will also outline what the attendance expectations are and what actions will follow, and we will

seek to support you. You may be asked to agree to an Attendance Improvement Contract. A referral may also be made to the Local Authority's School Attendance Service.

- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in the school literature, on our website, at open evenings, in the Home-School Agreement and in pupils' annual reports.
- If you inform us that your child has a documented medical condition, we will wish to discuss this with you. We will devise a care plan with you to support your child in school; this might also require us to refer to the school nurse.
- Analyse data to track, monitor and improve attendance and to identify priority pupil groups and trends.
- Where attendance concerns present, the school will offer interventions and work with parents and pupils, to support improved attendance.
- Where attendance concerns persist, escalate the matter to the Local Authority Court Officer; this includes unauthorised absence due to significant lateness
- Respond to requests made for term time leave although almost certainly not authorise them. If exceptional leave is agreed by the Headteacher/Principal, we will write formally to outline the conditions of this; share an expected return date and outline consequences of non-return on that date.
- Use a range of strategies to target individual pupils and groups who are or who are at risk of becoming persistently/severely absent. This will include (but is not limited to) data tracking, parental engagement and external agencies. Where improvements are not seen over set periods of time, further work with the local authority will be undertaken to impose more formal sanctions.

2.3 Home Visits

A home visit is a visit that requires school staff to enter the home of a parent or carer in the case of an emergency or procedural visit.

The aim of a home visit is:

- To establish a partnership between parents/carers and staff so that all parties share their knowledge about the child to enable the individual needs of the child to be met.
- To develop and strengthen relationships with parents/carers for the best interests of the child.

Home visits are to be used when:

- Students are refusing to come into school; this can be carried out by school staff when there are attendance issues/concerns
- When all other means of contact with a family has failed
- To meet with parents/carers to discuss an issue regarding their child where it is in the best interest of the child to have that discussion in their own home rather than at school or where it would be difficult for parents/carers to attend school for a meeting and information needs to be shared in a face-to-face meeting in a timely manner.
- To try and establish that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact parents/carers have not elicited a response and we have any welfare or safeguarding concerns for the student.
- To work with and support parents/carers in developing strategies to help their child attend school where attendance is an issue.

- To drop off or collect work for a child when they are completing schoolwork at home.
- To visit a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to a medical issue, so that they do not feel isolated from school.
- To investigate situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a child is not at school and reported as being ill, during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had been refused).

Home visits should take place with a SaFE worker and another member of the attendance/pastoral or leadership team. The school must be aware of which students are being visited and the anticipated timeframe. Staff must sign out and back in using the InVentory system. Home visits should take place during school hours unless an exceptional circumstance and agreed with the Principal.

A risk assessment of the situation must be undertaken by staff conducting home visits (location of parking, daylight, streetlighting, people around, condition of accommodation, animals in the home...etc) to ensure that they are always safe. If at any time the visit does not feel safe, then staff should end the visit and return to the academy immediately.

Once the home visit is completed the notes of the visit should be logged on the appropriate attendance tracker and on ClassCharts using the contact home button. If you have safeguarding concerns add a note to see CPOMS and log on CPOMS (alert DSL/DDSL).

3. Types of absence

3.1 Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. That is when the school accept a reason given for absence.

We realise that there are rare, unavoidable occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent such as sudden bereavement, unexpected parental illness or a family crisis. If this happens, please let us know and we shall try to deal with the matter sympathetically. Following such incidents, parents are expected to make any necessary arrangements for their child to return to school as soon as possible (ideally the next day). If the absence is likely to be prolonged Parents must write to the Headteacher/Principal outlining reasons.

Please note that when illness is a frequent reason claimed for absence then the school will ask for evidence other than a parent’s word in order to further allow authorisation. The school defines frequent illness as 10 days (20 sessions) missed within any rolling year or where one period of absence extends beyond 5 days without production of medical evidence.

3.2 Unauthorised 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 for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/going shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Term time holiday
- Parent’s illness (other than in an emergency)

- Where there is no explanation for an absence, or the school considers the reason given for the absence unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior to a period of school closure or authorised leave unless satisfactory evidence to justify has been provided.

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority. The EWO may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve.

Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action. Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines), prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

3.3 Persistent Absence

The school monitors attendance daily and reviews weekly. You can expect communication and intervention if attendance falls below our school target (96%) or there are any unusual patterns to absence. The school will discuss what interventions might be appropriate to seek to improve attendance.

If a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE), irrespective of the reason for absence, as a Persistent Absentee. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. **Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up, these gaps in their learning leave pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement - particularly at GCSE level.**

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters. In such cases, parents might be invited to agree to an Attendance Improvement Contract with the school as a way of managing improvement.

3.4 Exceptional Leave - Term Time Leave of Absence

Amendments to the 2006 School Attendance Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher/Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. if there is an emergency) at the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

- Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be considered. All leave is granted at the Headteacher/Principal's decision. Forms are available at the school office/primary reception and on the website. Please make contact with the school as soon as possible.
- If a pupil goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. Absence claimed as illness before or after a school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and medical evidence produced on return to school. Otherwise, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised leave.
- If you experience unexpected delays in returning on time for whatever reason, the school will **require documentary evidence accompanied with proof of original return dates.** i.e. tickets or an official travel plan showing intent to return on time. Medical Documentation

should be in English. In certain circumstances if a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term and absence extended their school place may be at risk.

- If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised, and you may be liable for a fixed penalty fine. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established, he/she may be regarded as a 'Child Missing Education'.
- Except as in the case of an emergency, retrospective approval cannot be given without an application having been made.

4. Punctuality

Good punctuality is a prerequisite to good learning and shows respect between pupil, family and school. Much of core learning begins immediately in the morning.

- Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the pupil. If showing up late to school becomes a habit, pupils may develop the notion that lateness is acceptable behaviour. This belief can negatively impact their future work ethic and employment opportunities.
- Morning registration is at 8.40 am in the high school. You need to aim for your child to come through the school gates by 8.35 am at the latest. Morning registration is at 8.30 am in the primary school. You need to aim for your child to come through the school gates by 8.25 am at the latest.
- Arrival after the close of registration (particularly if the lateness is frequent or persistent and there is not an acceptable reason) will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance; this has the value of an unauthorised absence. When late arrivals are frequent or persistent, we will want to discuss this with you. There is a programme of sanctions that will also be discussed with you.
- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.
- Please remember that absence for whatever reason, disadvantages a pupil by creating gaps in his/her learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom regularly and on time.

5 Leavers

5.1 School or geographical moves

If your child is leaving our school (other than at the end of Year 6 or Year 11) parents are asked to:

- Give the school comprehensive information about your plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date

when known. A destination country or another named local authority without other details is not sufficient.

This should be submitted to our school in writing. A LEAVERS' FORM is available from the school office and website which you should complete and return to the Attendance Administrator.

- When a pupil leaves and we do not have information about where they have gone, then he/she is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations to ascertain what other education your child is receiving. This will include liaising with Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (formerly Social Services), the Police, benefits/council tax records and other agencies, to try to locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

5.2 Withdrawals:

- Parents who remain resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed start date at another school or are undertaking to educate the child at home (Home Education). If the latter, this must be confirmed in writing to the school by the parent. Pupils remain registered at school until such conditions are satisfied.

6 Strategic Approach to Attendance

Alec Reed Academy places a strong emphasis on improving attendance and its importance to the life opportunities of young people.

The strategic lead in the Primary Phase is Taniya Ahmed (Deputy Head)

Taniya.Ahmed@alecreedacademy.co.uk

In the High School it is Helen Tinsley (Assistant Principal)

Helen.Tinsley@alecreedacademy.co.uk

