


Attendance Policy 2019



St Aloysius' College

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Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is Important

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.

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.

Promoting Regular Attendance

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

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Inform students of their attendance on a weekly basis and ensure they write it in their student planners;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through prizes, certificates and outings/events.

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 always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.



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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 Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (e.g. waiting for a repair man).
- 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.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If your child is regularly off school for illness or medical issues we will require evidence of this in the form of letters from your doctor/consultant or prescriptions.

If your child's attendance falls below 90% we will not authorise any illness without this evidence.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss one day a week or 15% 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 parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:



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- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence to leave a message on the absence line.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for the attendance officer to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, or a member of the leadership team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of 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 checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices, parenting contracts/orders, Education Supervision Orders or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Parents can contact the EWO through the school.



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Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.35am and we expect your child to be in their form class at that time.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of the Leadership team or the Head of Year and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holiday in 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 school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make withdrawing pupils for travel in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations, which took effect from 1st Sept 2013, make clear that Headteachers may **NOT** grant any leave of absence during term time.

Fines range from £60 to £120 per child and are payable by each parent.

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them, they are currently for every child to be in school at least **96% of the time for every half term.**

The minimum level of attendance for this school in line with the national average is 96% attendance. Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.



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Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.