



## ALDERMAN JACOBS PRIMARY SCHOOL (ACADEMY TRUST)

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

#### Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

#### Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school 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](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## Definitions

**Authorised** absence includes medical appointments, sickness, religious observance, study leave, exclusions and interviews.

**Unauthorised** absence includes lateness after registration closes, shopping for Christmas or birthday, tiredness after a late return from holiday, attending events, missing the bus, birthday treats.

## School Attendance

As a parent or carer you are strongly urged to avoid leave of absence from school during term time. Should this be absolutely unavoidable then you should fill in the school form and return it to the school office prior to the absence.

In September 2017 the Government updated its policy and made the following amendments:

**Unauthorised Term Time Leave (includes Holiday):** Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. **Therefore Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive schooldays or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable. The absences must be recorded with a 'G' code in the attendance register.** Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice. (The Supreme Court Judgement in the case between Isle of Wight Council v Platt (6 April 2017) clarified the meaning of regular school attendance in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. To attend school "regularly" means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".)

The government implemented new legislation that came into effect from September 2013 which means schools may only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. A parent or carer does not have any right to leave of absence during term time and if your request is refused the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This could result in legal action being taken or a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

A Penalty Notice involves a fine of £60 per child, per parent/carer if paid within 21 days, rising to £120, per child per parent/carer if paid within 28 days. Should a parent or carer on whom notice is served fails to pay the full amount of the fine within the specified time he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates court where on conviction a sentence of a fine of up to £2,500 or up to three months in prison may be imposed. Penalty Notices may only be served in accordance with the terms of the County Council Code of Conduct, a copy of which is retained by the school.

Should leave of absence be taken after permission has been withheld then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This will appear both in the school register and in your child's report. Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer and possible legal proceedings.

**Issues parents need to be aware of** ~ Should a school not agree to grant leave and the parents take their child on holiday regardless then this will be counted as unauthorised absence ~ this is the same as 'truancy'. (Schools are not legally required to record as specific category all absences which accrue as a consequence of family holidays which have been taken without authorisation). Should leave be granted but the child remain absent for longer than agreed then this extra time will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Should a child fail to return to school within 10 school days of the agreed return date and there is no contact from the parents the school may remove the child's name from the school roll. The school may also inform the Education Welfare Officer. In these circumstances the parents would be responsible for ensuring that their child was registered at and attended another school. (In such circumstances parents would not be entitled to receive any assistance with regard to transport).

### **The Law**

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full time education. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child as a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable education.

Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure he/she attends regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly, even if they miss school without you knowing, the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.

The LA is responsible for making sure that their registered children attend school regularly.

### **Attendance & Achievement**

If pupils are not in school, they cannot learn.

High rates of absence are associated with low academic achievement and increased chances of being drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour.

An increasing number of children are absent during the month of July, especially in the week leading into the holiday. Although school reports are complete, the absences do affect our figures for the year and on occasions they have brought the annual figures down.

As an academy we ask for your full commitment to your child's learning by booking holidays outside the school term.

### **What you can do to help?**

- ✓ Make sure your child attends regularly and punctually.
- ✓ Contacting the school with the reasons for absence.
- ✓ Contact the school if your child is unwilling to attend school. The school can usually resolve most difficulties.
- ✓ Avoid taking holidays during term time

### **What your child will miss?**

- A significant and disproportionate amount of teacher's time is taken from the class while they work with pupils who have missed important steps.

- In addition, those in the same work groups as absent pupils will invariably have their learning held up.
- Work missed cannot be covered again by the teacher.
- Links that are missed will affect future learning and may lead to confusion.

**What we will authorise/will not authorise**

- Term time holidays are not an entitlement.
- Term time holidays will not be authorised other than exceptional circumstances.
- Cheaper holidays in term time are not considered to be exceptional circumstances.
- An exceptional circumstance is likely to be a one off situation, such as a family trauma or bereavement.
- A pupil's overall attendance record will be taken into consideration, even when illness has affected this. Exceptional circumstance leave will not be granted if attendance has been under 95%.
- Should a pupil be taken out of school during term time without the Headteacher's permission, the absence will automatically be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Should absence be agreed and authorised, and a pupil fails to return to school with 10 school days of the agreed date, the school may remove the pupil's name from the school roll.

**Absence Procedures**

**If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.00a.m. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is able to take your call.
- Call into the school office and report the absence to the front desk.

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

- Contact you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.00 am

**Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a 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 lesson, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

**How we manage lateness**

The school day starts at 8.50am and we expect our children to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the whistle is blown at 8.45am. Once the doors are closed all children entering late will need to enter via the main door and be signed in. If your child misses the register they will receive a late mark.

Should your child have a persistent late record of five or more lates you will be notified by letter in order to try to resolve the problem, and equally if you are experiencing problems getting your child to school you should approach us for help.

<b>Statutory/<del>Non-Statutory</del></b>				
<b>Created/</b>	<b>Ratified</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Next</b>	<b>Signed by</b>

Reviewed/ Updated				Frequency	Review Date		
By	Date	By	Date			Head	Chair
Nicky Baker	Sept 2016	Full Governing Body	14 Dec 2016	4 Years	Autumn 2020	<i>Cathy Carole</i>	<i>Whitland</i>
<del>Created/ Reviewed/ Updated</del>							
Nicky Baker	Sept 2017						