ALDENHAM
PREP SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Including the

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

Revised September 2026

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Scope

Aldenham Prep School is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality. To ensure uninterrupted progress, pupils need to attend school regularly. Being absent without leave can have a serious effect on a child's academic and social progress.

Daily registration is a legal requirement and must be done accurately, and attendance registers are legal documents. A pupil's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been marked as a 'leaver' in the admissions register.

This policy and procedure document is intended to guide, assist and empower the School to maintain excellent levels of attendance and to meet the responsibility to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures can be applied.

For the purposes of this policy the term 'parents' is taken to mean parents or legal guardians.

Aim

This policy aims to show the School's commitment to meeting its obligations with regard to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support needed to attend school.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (Part 3, Paragraph 15);
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (current statutory guidance);
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance;
- Education Act 1996 (Section 436A);
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175);
- Equality Act 2010.

School Attendance and the Law

All schools must maintain admissions registers and must have an attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 require schools to maintain admissions and attendance registers and record attendance in accordance with statutory requirements. If the pupil does not attend, they will be recorded as absent: this can be authorised or unauthorised.

A school will authorise an absence if:

- The child is too ill to attend and the School accepts this as valid. If the child is off for long periods the School might ask for proof from the doctor;
- The parent has got the advance permission of the School e.g. for a religious observation;
- The child has been excluded (temporarily or permanently);
- The child has a medical or dental appointment;
- The child is on study leave; or
- The child is being educated off-site.

Schools have to inform the local authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from School, have irregular attendance, or have missed 10 or more school days without the School's permission.

Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

• Monitor attendance trends and patterns.

• Receive attendance reports.

• Hold leaders accountable for implementation of this policy.

Headteacher

• Has overall responsibility for attendance.

• Authorises leave requests.

• Reports attendance information to Governors.

Deputy Headteacher / DDSL

• Leads attendance interventions.

• Supports families where attendance concerns arise.

• Liaises with external agencies where appropriate.

Prep School Administrator

• Undertakes daily attendance monitoring.

• Completes first-day contact procedures.

• Maintains attendance records.

Class Teachers

• Complete accurate registers.

• Monitor attendance and punctuality.

• Raise concerns promptly.

Parents

• Ensure regular attendance and punctuality.

• Notify the School of absences promptly.

• Provide emergency contact details.

Pupils

• Attend regularly and punctually.

• Engage positively with support offered by the School.

Absences

If a child is going to be absent from School unexpectedly (e.g. due to illness or a family bereavement), parents must inform the School by completing the Absence Form on My School Portal. Parents must do this by 8am on each day of absence. In the event of an unexplained absence, the Prep School Administrator will contact the pupil's primary emergency contact as soon as reasonably practicable after the register closes and continue first-day absence procedures until the pupil's whereabouts have been established.

For 'leave requests' (absences which are known about in advance) parents are asked to give the School as much notice as possible. To obtain authorisation for a leave request (e.g. for co-curricular commitments outside school, future school appointments, medical appointments, religious observances, weddings, funerals or a holiday) parents are asked to contact the Headteacher for approval by submitting the leave request form on MSP.

It is appreciated if medical and dental appointments such can be arranged during the school holidays, whenever possible.

Punctuality

- The School should take active steps to encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness is monitored and followed up by the Headteacher.
- School documentation should clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close (see appendices).
- When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open, s/he should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.
- When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her parent must sign in on Inventry at the main entrance and the pupil will be marked as late with the time duly noted.

Rationale and School Responsibilities

- The Governors are responsible for monitoring attendance trends and ensuring effective attendance arrangements are in place.
- The Headteacher has overall administrative responsibility within the School for attendance procedures on a daily basis (delegated to the Prep School Administrator).
- In the event of a fire drill or other emergency situation, the School must be able to carry out an immediate headcount to ascertain the number of pupils physically present on site.
- Registration data will be available for Inspection when required and the Headteacher will be responsible for providing data for inspections. The DfE requires schools to maintain pupil attendance statistics; registers are subject to inspection by ISI. The Class teacher is responsible for ensuring that pupils have registered. The School reports annually to the Governing Body's Education Committee on Pupil Absence.
- Class teachers will deal with parents over issues related to attendance and punctuality in the first instance. Any such issues will be followed up by a member of SLT if required/appropriate. Class teachers should therefore:

    - Monitor and deal appropriately with lateness, liaising with the Administration Assistant and parents as appropriate.
    - Monitor and respond to pupil absence without notification - please refer to the Missing Pupil Policy in the case of unexplained absences.

A pupil's individual circumstances are always taken into consideration wherever there are attendance and punctuality issues.

Where there has been long term absence for any reason, a re–integration plan will be developed with the pupil, the parents, the Class teacher and the Headteacher.

Attendance Intervention

The School will monitor attendance closely and identify pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern.

- Persistent absence is attendance below 90%.
- Severe absence is attendance below 50%.

Where attendance falls below expected levels, the School will work proactively with pupils and families to identify barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support.

Support may include:

- Meetings with parents.
- Attendance targets.
- Reintegration plans.
- Referral to external agencies.
- Multi-agency support where appropriate.

Approved Educational Activities

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities should be recorded as such. A pupil should be recorded as absent due to an approved educational activity if s/he is on or at:

- A field trip or educational visit
- An approved sporting activity
- A visit to or entrance examination at another school

Expectation of Parents

The School actively discourages parents from arranging term time holidays because it is disruptive to the education of pupils. Parents are reminded that leave of absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and remains at the discretion of the Headteacher.

In cases where parents willfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at effecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the DDSL will seek advice from the relevant local authority. This may result in legal proceedings on the grounds that no other course of action is available and the pupil will be removed from the School and identified as a "Child Missing from Education".

If a pupil is deleted from the school register when the next school is not known, the School is required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the Local Authority in which the pupil lives.

Expectations of Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day when school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Pupils should:

- Attend all lessons and all relevant activities when at school;
- Be punctual to lessons particularly those which come after a break /lunch;
- Be ready to learn and be organised with the right equipment; and
- If they arrive late, wait until their parent has followed registration protocols and having entered School be taken to or go straight to their classroom/ next lesson.

Appendix A – Registration

The attendance register must be completed at the start of each morning session and afternoon session, Registers must be recorded and saved on the School Management Information System (currently iSAMS). In the morning and afternoon Class teachers or subject teachers will take the register for their Class.

It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

It is the responsibility of the School Administrator to regularly check the electronic registers, following up any absences and ensuring that the system is up to date and accurate. This information will be conveyed to Class teachers, the Deputy head and the Headteacher.

Registration Period

AM and PM registration is defined as a 5 minute time slot from 8.45am to 8.50am and from 1.05pm to 1.10pm. For Nursery and Reception from 9.00am – 9.05am.

Procedures for Class teachers taking registration:

- Pupil is physically in front of tutor at allotted time: Class teacher uses / for AM and \ for PM.
- Pupil is not physically in front of the tutor: Class teacher records N (reason for absence not yet provided)
- Formal registration closes at 8.50am and 1.10pm
- Pupil arrives late but before 8.50am/1.10pm: Class teacher records L (Late)
- Pupil turns up after 8.45am: Pupil is registered by parent on Inventry explaining the reason for late arrival. The Prep School Administrator will alter the electronic register from N to L (if the reason is deemed to be valid) or N to U (Late after registration is closed and there is no valid reason. The Prep School Administrator can begin to consolidate the registers on the system to establish which pupils have still not been seen by that stage and whose absence is therefore unauthorised.

- The School has a responsibility to physically check whether a pupil who has been marked N is present in his/her first lesson before phoning home. The Prep School Administrator checks the registration status report for those pupils unaccounted for. If the pupil is absent from the class, the Prep School Administrator or Senior Administrator will ring home to verify the absence. All pupils will have been accounted for by 10am each day and this confirmed to the Deputy Head.

Aldenham Foundation Registration Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance These attendance codes will be used by all Foundation Schools to record and monitor attendance and absences as shown below.

Late Departures

Children are expected to be collected at 3.30pm each day unless they are booked into Late Club or an after school Club. A member of staff will contact the parent within 10 minutes if their child has not been collected. The Parent can instruct the member of staff if they wish their child to go into Late Club. If the parent is enroute then the child will be required to sit by the school office until the parent arrives. The Missing Child Policy and procedures will be followed if the child is not collected and contact has not been made with the family.

Educational visits, sports fixtures, music lessons and activities

- Staff who take pupils away on a sporting fixture/educational visit before a registration period (am or pm) must ensure that they take a face-to-face roll of the pupils travelling to the event and leave a copy of this list in the School Office for it to be recorded on the system.
- If an on site event cuts across the formal registration period, staff running the event must inform Class teachers and the Prep School Administrator and the School Office of the pupils who are affected.

Consolidation of Electronic Register

- Class teachers must ensure, together the Prep School Administrator and Deputy Head, that electronic registers are kept up to date with no outstanding absences that are more than two weeks old (unless agreed with the Deputy Head).

Appendix B – Children Missing Education

The Aldenham Foundation recognises that all children are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs or disabilities.

A child missing education may be an indicator of abuse, neglect, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines involvement or other safeguarding concerns. Any concerns that a pupil may be missing education will therefore be treated as a safeguarding issue and managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of any child who is missing education in their jurisdiction. As detailed in the Safeguarding Policy, a child missing education can often be an indicator of wider issues of abuse or neglect. In addition, such a child is more likely to be drawn into issues such as County Lines, gang membership, child sexual exploitation (CSE) or child criminal exploitation (CCE).

All staff involved in the pastoral care of children should therefore be familiar with the established procedures for monitoring unauthorized absence and should pay particular attention to any patterns of absence being formed, regardless of whether authorization for absence has been requested by parents or carers.

The School is required to notify the child's Local Authority when a pupil joins or leaves the School at a non-standard transition point (i.e. not at the beginning of the academic year). A careful record of all such joiners and leavers is kept by the Admissions Co-ordinator in each School who contacts the relevant Local Authority when such a transition takes place. Further information can be found in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

When a pupil leaves the School and the child's parent or carer has informed the School of the transition, the Admissions Co-ordinator will make every reasonable attempt to confirm the identity of the pupil's new school and home address where relevant, in addition to the start date at the new School.

If a pupil leaves the School without such information having been obtained from parents or carers, s/he will be deemed to be missing education. The Admissions Co-ordinator will contact the Children Missing Education Officer at the relevant Local Authority as a matter of urgency in such circumstances. If the whereabouts of the child cannot be established, the Hertfordshire Children Missing Education Officer should be contacted on csf.cme@hertscc.gov.uk in the first instance. In addition, informal methods (such as contacting the child's friends to see if they know of the whereabouts of the child) may be used to attempt to establish the identity of the new school. Ensuring the child's safety will be paramount in any enquiries made.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		

K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: · In police detention · Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or · Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays