



Pupil Attendance Policy

Pupil Attendance Policy (Including EYFS)

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Reviewed By: A Evans & SLT

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Updates and Amendments to Policy

Date	Section Heading	Update Details	Page N°

CONTENTS		
Section	Title	Page N°
Section 1	Policy Statement	4
Section 2	Promoting Good Attendance	4
Section 3	Roles and Responsibilities	5
3.1	Headteacher	5
3.2	Attendance Co-ordinator	5
3.3	Teaching Staff	5
3.4	Pupils	5
3.5	Parents & Carers	5
Section 4	Recording Attendance	6
4.1	Attendance Codes	6
4.2	Lateness and Punctuality	7
Section 5	Types of Absence	8
5.1	Authorised and Unauthorised Absence	8
5.2	Absence Due to Illness	9
5.3	Request for Leave of Absence – Medical/Dental Appointments	9
5.4	Request for Leave of Absence – Holidays in Term Time	9
5.5	Request for Leave of Absence – Public Performances (Theatre, Film, TV and Modelling Work)	10
5.6	Request for Leave of Absence – Sporting (Regional, County, National or International Level)	10
5.7	Continued and Ongoing Absence	10
Section 6	Advice to Parents and Carers	10
Section 7	Leavers	11
Section 8	Record Keeping	11
Section 9	Monitoring	11
Section 10	Reviewer and Governing Body Sign-Off	12
Appendix A	Absence Request Form (Including Term Time Holidays)	13
Appendix B	Telephone Message Absence Note	14

Section 1 Policy Statement

For a child to reach their full educational achievement and potential, a high level of school attendance is essential.

At Avalon School we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all children feel valued and welcome. Parents/carers and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents/carers and teachers share the responsibility for support and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is School's duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupil and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered at Avalon School it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%;
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Act (2004), Education Act (1996), Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) and Education & Inspection Act (2006), Regulations and Guidance from the Department of Education (2019) and links to other guidance from the Local Authority. The policy should be read in conjunction with Avalon School's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, Children Missing Education Policy, Pupil Supervision Policy, Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions Policy, Medical & First Aid Policy, SEND Policy and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (available on the school website).

Section 2 Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child.

To help us all to focus on this, Avalon School will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletter and on our school website;
- Report to you on how our child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance at the end of each half term;
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates;
- Set targets for the school, classes and individuals for attendance.

Section 3

Roles And Responsibilities

3.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate Avalon Schol's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

3.2 Attendance Co-ordinator

The Attendance Co-ordinator will:

- Ensure that attendance registers are recorded accurately on a daily basis;
- Ensure that messages from parents regarding absence are taken and recorded accurately. All messages are to be signed off by the Headteacher daily and filed in the child's pastoral file (see Appendix B);
- Make first response calls to parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made;
- Ensure details of any children arriving late are recorded and entered into the registers;
- Analyse the attendance registers on a regular basis for the whole school, classes and individuals looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for absence offered by children and the parents/carers. Ensuring that all concerns are reported to the Headteacher.

3.3 Teaching Staff

The Teaching staff will:

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately (see further details on recording attendance under Section 4 Recording Attendance.
- Ensure that the completed register is returned to the school office by 9am and 1.20pm;
- Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities;
- Laise with the Headteacher an SLT on any matter of attendance and punctuality;
- Communicate with the Headteacher and SLT any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

3.4 Pupils

Pupils will:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence;
- Arrive at school on time every day;
- Ensure that they are in the classroom before the register closes both in morning and afternoon, otherwise they will be marked as arriving late to school.

3.5 Parents/Carers

In accordance with the Education Act (1996) parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and is in school for every lesson after they have registered. In educational law; parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure that regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure that their child will attend school every day unless they are too unwell;

- If unwell, parents/carers must inform the school by 9.00am either in person at the school office or by the telephone by leaving a message on the absence line or by speaking directly to a member of the admin team on the first and each subsequent day of absence;
- Trust that school staff will contact parents/cares during the school day if a child is too unwell to stay in school.
- Ensure that school have at least two sets of contact details and that these are kept up to date.
- Make all non-urgent medical or dental appointments outside of school hours whenever possible;
- Inform school by completing a Pupil Absence Request Form (See Appendix A) in advance for any leave of absence. If a medical or dental appointment parents/carers should provide evidence from a doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter) which should be attached to the form;
- Ensure that their child arrived at school on time (8.30am to 8.50am);
- Register your child at the School Office if arriving after 8.45am, a reason should be offered for any lateness;
- Work closely with the school to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance;
- Take family holidays during the school holiday periods only. Requests for holidays will only be approved in exceptional circumstances;
- Note that making requests for authorised leave of absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary are not automatically authorised;
- Contact school as soon as possible about their child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with;
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.

Section 4 Recording Attendance

The class attendance register is a legal document which must be completed twice daily. Once at the start of the day at 8.50am and again for the afternoon session at 1.10pm. Registers must be completed in pen.

When a child is absent for the register staff are to leave the register blank so that the Attendance Co-ordinate can complete with the appropriate code once the reason for the absence has been established.

4.1 Attendance Codes

The follow set of standard codes are to be used consistently within the class register. These codes are used to analysis attendance and monitor absences.

Reg Codes	School Meanings	Statistical Meaning & Notes
/	Present AM	Present.
\	Present PM	Present.
B	Education off site	Approved educational activity. Used for a supervised educational activity that has been agreed by the school.
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence. Exceptional circumstances but not a holiday.
E	Excluded	Authorised absence. Alternative provision must be made from the 6 th day of any fixed period.

G	Holiday – not authorised	Unauthorised absence. Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of period determined by the headteacher.
H	Holiday - authorised	Authorised absence. Holiday authorised in exceptional circumstances only and applied for in advance by parents/carers by completing the absence request form.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised absence. Parents/carers to notify school on each day of illness. School can ask for medical evidence to be provided by parents/carers (prescription / appointment card etc) should authenticity of illness is in doubt. Absence can be recorded as unauthorised if not satisfied (parents/carers should be advised of this decision).
L	Late	Present. Arrived at school after the register has closed.
M	Medical/dental appointment	Authorised absence. Parents/carers should complete absence request form and provide evidence from a doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter).
N	No reason yet given for absence	Unauthorised absence. If no reason has been given after 2 weeks it should be replaced with a code 'O'.
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence. Given if school is not satisfied with the reason given or no reason given.
P	Approved sporting activity	Present Approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence. If in doubt of dates, school may seek advice from religious body.
V	Educational visit	Present. Approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. Includes residential trips.
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required. Child not yet joined school.
#	School closed to pupils	Attendance not required. School holidays, bank holidays and INSET days.

4.2 Lateness and Punctuality

It is important for children to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. If your child is late, they can miss work and vital information. Lateness causes disruption to the lesson and other children. Lateness can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

The school day begins at 8.45am, and all children are expected to be in school at this time. Morning registration is at 8.50am and closes at 9.00am.

Children arriving after 8.50am must report to the school office to be signed in as late. This will be recorded in the register with code 'L'.

All lateness is recorded daily. This information may be required by the courts should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

If a child is late due to a medical/dental appointment, they must report to the school office to be sign in and will be recorded with code 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentist appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. When term time appointments are unavailable a pupil absence request form must be completed accompanied with an appointment letter/card.

Children who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence.

Parents or carers of children who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved.

School asks parents and carers to collect their children promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected children to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies.

Section 5

Types of Absence

5.1 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exception reason for the absence. A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. There are two main categories of absence:

Authorised Absences: are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidable fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

- Leave of absence authorised by the school but not a holiday (code 'C')
- Excluded from school but no alternative provision made (code 'E')
- Holiday authorised by the school (exceptional circumstances only) (code 'H')
- Illness (code 'I')
- Medical or dental appointments (code 'M')
- Religious observance (code 'R')

Unauthorised Absences: are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. It is this type of absence which may lead to sanctions or legal proceedings and include:

- Holiday not authorised by the school (code 'G')
- Reason for absence not yet provided (code 'N')
- Absent from school with authorisation, this may include shopping, birthdays etc (code 'O')

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

School can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice-versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent/carer states that a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

5.2 Absence Due to Illness

If a child is absent parents/carers must contact the school as soon as possible on the first and every subsequent day of the absence, by telephoning the school office on 0151 25 6993 or calling into the school office in person. The absence will be recorded as authorised (code 'I')

Parents/cares should contact the school by 9.00am to notify the school of their child's absence providing as much information as possible regarding the reason for the absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. The headteacher has the authority to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

If school has not received a reason for a child's absence, they will contact the parents/carers requesting these details. This is because school has a duty to ensure that children are safety as well as ensuring regular school attendance. If school cannot make contact with to confirm the reason for the absence, they will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with other named pupil contacts. The absence will be recorded as an authorised absence (code 'O').

School may require more evidence, particularly if there are repeat absences for medical reasons. School will accept the following as medical evidence (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Doctor's certificate
- Appointment card – date stamped
- Medication in the name of the child
- Prescription
- Text message from doctor or NHS confirming an appointment
- Care of the chemist – date stamped slip to show medical advice has been sought
- Appointment letter from hospital, doctor or dentist

5.3 Request for Leave of Absence – Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents and carers are asked to make all non-urgent medical or dental appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. If it is unavoidable to make a medical or dental appointment within school time parents/carers are required to inform school by completed a Pupil Absence Request Form (see Appendix A) and provide evidence from a doctor/hospital or dentist (appointment card/letter) which should be attached to the form. This absence will be recorded as code 'M'.

5.4 Request for Leave of Absence – Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect children's education and parents/carers are discouraged from taking their children out of school during term time and we ask that this is considered before making a request for a leave of absence.

In line with government guidance, leaves of absence during term time will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances. The principle for defining exceptional are rare, significant, unavoidable and short, with unavoidable meaning an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

There is no legal entitlement in law to a leave of absence from school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance by completing the Pupil Request for Absence Form (see Appendix A). Once complete this must be return to the Headteacher, who will determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether the absence will be authorised at all.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

5.5 Request for Leave of Absence – Public Performances (Theatre, Film, Tv and Modelling Work)
Parents/carers of a child performer can seek a leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance license and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Parents/carers should complete a Pupil Request for Absence Form (see Appendix A) and return it to the Headteacher.

5.6 Request for Leave of Absence – Sporting (Regional, County, National or International Level)
Parents/carers of able sportsmen and women can seek a leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for children to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

5.7 Continued and Ongoing Absence

If a child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year (for whatever reason) they are defined as persistent absentees. Where this absence is authorised, the school will meet with parents/carers in order to ascertain any underlying medical reason for the level of absence. The school may decide not to authorise any future absences without medical evidence.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. If a child's attendance level falls below 90% school will contact parents/carers and depending on the reason for the absence, will agree a plan with parents/carers to ensure the attendance improves.

Children at Avalon School are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents/carers are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Section 6

Advice for Parents and Carers

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometime reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best dealt with between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a 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 may make things worse.

We would ask that parents/carers contact their child's class teacher and openly discuss their worries and concerns. There may be a number of reasons for a child to avoid attending school – for example difficulties with school work, friendship problems, family difficulties and so on. It is important that school identifies the reason for a child's reluctances to attend school and work together with parents/carers to tackle the problem. In some cases, it may be helpful for parents/carers to discuss the circumstances for their child's difficulties with other professionals.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

We would ask parents/carers to ensure that their child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct uniform and properly equipped for the day ahead.

Being interested in what their child's doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learn, what friends they have and even what they had for lunch. Showing that their education is important and valued.

For many parents/carers their child attending school may be the first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first, but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for both parents/carers and children.

Section 7 Leavers

If a child is leaving Avalon School (other than transferring to secondary school) parents/carers are asked to:

- Give the school comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move, new address, telephone numbers, parent/carer email addresses, their child's new school and start date when known. This information must be submitted in writing as part of the withdrawal notice. This information will be used to inform the Local Authority of the transfer.
- If a child leaves and school does not have the above information, then the child will be considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires school and the Local Authority to then carry out investigations to try and locate the child which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving school the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Section 8 Record Keeping

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for seven years.

Section 9 Monitoring

Monitoring will take place annually and will also be undertaken whenever there is a change of circumstances relating to the school and its use.

Avalon School expect all employees to effectively plan, organise, implement control, monitor and review the preventative and protective measures required to ensure the promotion and health and safety in this school.

Avalon School believe that a healthy and safe school environment is a fundamental part of promoting effective teaching and learning.

Section 10
Reviewer and Governing Body Sign-Off

This policy will be given to all staff members who must read.

J Callaway, Headteacher

C Kidd, Chair of Governors

APPENDIX A – Pupil Request for Absence (Including Holidays)



**AVALON SCHOOL
Pupil Absence Request Form
(including holidays)**

PUPIL DETAILS	
Name:	
Class:	
Date of Birth:	
Address:	

ABSENCE REQUEST DETAILS	
Start date of requested absence:	
End date of requested absence:	
Return to school date:	
Reason for absence request (attached evidence if applicable):	
Name of Parent/Carer:	
Signed:	
Date:	

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Comment by Headteacher:	
Headteacher Signed:	
Date:	

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM-TIME ARE NOT AUTHORISED

APPENDIX B – Telephone Message Absence Note



Absence Notice

Parent/Carer: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name _____ Year Group _____

Message

JC Signed: _____ Dated: _____