



# **ALTRINCHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

## **Attendance Policy**

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| Author:              | Miss A White – Registrar and PA to Headmaster  |
| Responsible Person:  | John Davies – Interim Head   |
| Date of last review: | September 2020 - L McKenna (Deputy Head)   |
| Summary of changes:  | Change of Author<br>Change of Headmaster<br>Change in school day drop-off and collection timings<br>Change in arrangements for signing pupils out for medical appointments / illness |
| Date of next review: | September 2022   |

## Attendance Policy

*Note: This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS*

### 1. Introduction

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated - pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance records tend to achieve less in their Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior years.

The Government expects the following from schools:

- to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- to ensure every pupil has high levels of attendance so he can access the education he is entitled to;
- to act early to address patterns of absence;
- to encourage parents to perform their legal duties by ensuring their child attends school regularly;
- to ensure all pupils are punctual to lessons.

### 2. School Day

All pupils are required to be in school by 8.55am with the exception of Pre-School pupils who are required to be in school for 9.00am. The normal school day ends at the following times:

- Pre-School - Morning session: 1pm; Afternoon session: 3.15pm
- Reception - 3.15pm
- Years 1 and 2 - 3.30pm
- Year 3 - 3.30pm
- Year 4 - 3.40pm
- Year 5 - 3.50pm
- Year 6 - 4.00pm

Pupils are registered at both the start of the morning and afternoon sessions each day.

### 3. Notifying the school of illness

If an occasion arises where your child is ill, please e-mail [admin@altprep.co.uk](mailto:admin@altprep.co.uk) or telephone the school (0161 928 3366) before 09:00 each and every day of absence. If the school has not heard from a parent or guardian we will telephone in order to enquire as to his whereabouts.

We ask that you make contact with us each day your son is going to be absent in order that we can keep our records updated and importantly, so that we can keep abreast of his progress to full health and anticipated return date.

### 4. Late Arrival

Registration takes place twice each day at 8.55am and 1.15pm. It is therefore essential that if a pupil arrives late, he signs in at Reception so our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

Our systems are again updated at 09:30 when we compile a final Registration for the morning. At this point, if you have not contacted the school by telephone or email, a list will be generated of pupils who are not present and this will prompt our Reception team to contact you.

### 5. Leaving school early during the day

Pupils are not normally allowed to leave the site during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff, for a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture.

If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a Parent is collecting him for a medical appointment, the Reception team will sign the pupil 'out' prior to leaving the school sites.

## **6. Requests for absence**

### **6.1 Requesting absence**

If you wish to request an absence for any planned appointment or event, you should make the request in writing via email and send it to: [admin@altprep.co.uk](mailto:admin@altprep.co.uk) marked 'absence request'. In line with Department for Education guidelines absence during term time is discouraged.

### **6.2 Compassionate grounds or exceptional circumstances**

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances should be made in writing to the Headmaster in advance of the proposed absence when possible. Absence in exceptional circumstances does not include the following:

- birthdays
- holidays
- days out as a special treat
- other family celebrations

### **6.3 Authorising absence**

The Government has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. The main areas where the school will authorise absence are given below:

#### **6.3.1. Illness**

Where schools accept that a pupil is ill, they must authorise the absence but can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.

#### **6.3.2 Appointments**

Dental and medical appointments are authorised absences but, where possible, such appointments should be made out of school hours.

#### **6.3.3 Holidays**

The Regulations state that time off for family holidays is not a right. Parents do not have the right to take a child out of school during term time. By law parents must ask prior permission for their child to miss school. The Regulations do not allow the school to give retrospective approval.

The Headmaster is only able to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If the Headmaster grants a leave request, it is for him to determine the length of time that the boy can be away from school. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday and you could face prosecution if you take your child out of school without permission.

Holidays which are taken for the following reasons will definitely not be authorised:

- availability of cheap holidays;
- availability of desired accommodation;
- poor weather in school holiday periods;
- overlap with the beginning or end of term.

### **6.3.4 Religious observance**

The school will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the school may seek confirmation from that religious body that the day has been set apart for religious observance.

### **6.3.5 Exceptional circumstances / unavoidable causes**

Authorised absence will be granted for compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

## **7. Poor attendance**

The Department for Education (DfE) expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of approximately 90% and above; any figure below this is deemed as poor attendance.

### **7.1 Persistent absentees**

The Department for Education has changed the definition of 'Persistent Absence' to deal with the reality of pupil absenteeism in schools and its impact on their learning. The Department has reduced the threshold at which a pupil is defined as 'Persistently Absent' to 15 per cent.

Pupils whose attendance is below 85 per cent are now officially classed as 'Persistent Absentees'. The school will be obliged to contact the parents if their son's attendance drops below that figure. If attendance does not improve and absence continues to be persistent, the school will contact Trafford Education Welfare Department.

## **8. Summary of the law taken from the guidelines for ISI inspection**

All Independent schools - Regulation 3(17) "The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006".

Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers, an Admissions register, known as the "School Roll", and an Attendance register. School Inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

The Regulations covering school admission and attendance are very prescriptive reflecting the importance that successive Governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and during the afternoon for all day pupils. The Regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained.

## **9. Attendance registration system**

Attendance is recorded on the school's 'Gateway' Management Information System using the registration codes identified by the Department for Education.

## **10. Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities**

The school's attendance register is summarised weekly and stored electronically. It is backed up, in the form of an electronic copy, at least once a month and records are retained for three years after the end of the school year in question.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools may therefore receive an enquiry about whether they are educating a specific child. Schools are required to alert their local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has:

- been absent without authority for 10 consecutive school days, or
- failed to attend school regularly, or
- been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing.