



Dame Alice Owen's School
The Dame Alice Owen Foundation - 1613

ATTENDANCE POLICY

(Statutory Policy)

Policy agreed by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee
To be reviewed
(every 2 years)

Summer 2024
Summer 2026

To be monitored by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee

Introduction

At Dame Alice Owen's School, we aim to encourage and assist all young people to reach outstanding levels of attendance and punctuality. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that only if children attend school regularly and punctually will they be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and achieve as well as they can. This correlation is borne out in our own data; at Dame Alice Owen's School, our level of attendance is higher than the national average, as are our results.

The Deputy Head, Pastoral, has responsibility for ensuring excellent attendance across the School.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ensure that students succeed whilst at school.
- ensure that students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412638/The_link_between_absence_and_attainment_at_KS2_and_KS4.pdf

Student attendance is categorised as follows

Grade	Excellent	Good	Poor	Cause for Concern
Percentage attendance	96 - 100%	93 - 95%	90-92%	85-89%
Number of days absent per term	3.5	5	6.5	10
Number of days absent per year	10.5	15	19.5	30

The government classifies students with attendance below 90% as 'persistent absentees'. Whilst 90% may appear to seem a reasonable level of attendance to some, it means almost 20 lost teaching days over the year, which equates to 4 out of 39 weeks of lost learning.

The School aims to work in partnership with families and carers to promote and encourage excellent attendance.

Promoting Regular Attendance

How can parents help ensure their child's excellent attendance?

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by sending their child to school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents can help with their child's attendance by:

- Ensuring their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn; establishing a good routine in the morning and evening so that children are prepared for the school day ahead.
- Ensuring their child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when a child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an avoidable / unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing difficulty / period of difficulty.
- Ensure they are aware of the Attendance policy of the School.
- Impress on their child the need to observe the School's code of conduct.
- Taking truancy seriously - if a child is not attending school as expected are they putting themselves at risk - question them: Where are they? Who are they with? What have they been doing?
- Not taking family holidays during term time.
- Talking to their child about school and taking an interest in their school work.
- Attending Parents' Evenings and school events.
- Working in partnership with the School to resolve any issues, which may lead to non-attendance.
- Praising and rewarding children's achievements at school.
- Discussing problems or difficulties with the School - staff are there to help and support.

- Telephoning or emailing on the first morning of any absence to give the reason and tell the school when the child is likely to return. To continue to contact the School on **each** day of absence.
- Arranging all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Providing medical evidence in the case of frequent absence.
- Providing appropriate medication to support their child's attendance at school.
- Keeping the School updated by telephone, email or letter if the child has any extended period of absence.
- Making sure we always have current contact numbers of parents; this includes all telephone numbers; child care arrangements and emergency contact details.

The School shall:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools
- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, emails and letters as necessary.
- Let parents know if the School has concerns regarding a child's attendance and punctuality. (See Appendices)
- Work closely with parents/carers by telephone/face to face meetings to help improve a child's attendance.
- If we continue to have concerns, we may make a referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer.
- Support the attendance of students and deal with problems the School has been alerted to which could lead to non-attendance.
- Ensure registers are taken. These are legal documents which can be required as evidence in court cases.
- Through registers, carefully monitor attendance across the School at KS3 and KS4.
- Write 'at risk letters' to those families whose children run the risk of attaining below 90% attendance over two terms.
- Use a range of interventions to help support families with children who have difficulties with attendance.
- Work closely with outside agencies to support full attendance.

Types of Absence

Every half day absence is classified by the School as **authorised** or **unauthorised**. An absence can only be authorised by the School. It is not possible for a parent to authorise an absence.

An authorised absence are mornings or afternoons away from School for a good reason including but is not limited to:

- Illness;
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments;
- Religious observance;
- Emergencies.

Unauthorised absences are those that the School does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes but is not limited to:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;

- Truancy;
- Unexplained absence;
- Students arriving after 10am with no appropriate reason;
- Day trips and holidays taken without prior authorisation by the School.

Procedures

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure full attendance at school. If their child cannot avoid being absent then they will need to follow the procedure below:

- Inform the School Office by telephone (01707 643441) or email (attendance@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk) by 9.15am on the first day of their child's absence from school and, where an absence goes beyond the first day, keep the School up to date regarding the absence **each day** by 9.15am.
- Where no advice of an absence is received, parents may expect the School to contact them on the first and every day of absence.
- Parents must provide an email upon the student's return giving reason for their absence. If no reason is given, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carers requesting the reason for absence.
- Provide medical evidence if the absence is longer than 5 consecutive school days, or when requested by the Attendance Officer.
- All absence notes are kept for at least a term. When a student's absence is a cause for concern the notes are to be retained until there is no longer a concern.
- Inform the School Office in advance of any medical appointments which could not be scheduled outside of school hours.
- Make any requests for any other type of absences that may be authorised e.g. religious festival, performing in music or drama events in reasonable time. Requests should be addressed to the Attendance Officer, who will consult the Pastoral Team.
- Please note requests for holidays are very strongly discouraged and will not normally be authorised. Requests can be made to the Deputy Head, Pastoral, who will consult with the Headteacher regarding any mitigating circumstances which may mean a holiday within school time should be considered.
- In the event that any safeguarding concerns exist about students for whom contact has not been made, Pastoral Director and/or the DSP (Designated Safeguarding Person) may be informed.
- If no reason or contact has been provided for a student's absence after 3 consecutive days, a Police Welfare Check will be initiated.
- If the school has knowledge that a student has been taken out of the country without seeking permission of the school, Letter 8 (Appendix 12) will be sent.
- If a student's attendance falls below 93% then the following actions will be taken as outlined in Appendix 1.
- Students with attendance between 93% and 90% will be sent Letter 1 (Appendix 2).
- Where attendance falls below 90% Letter 2 will be sent (Appendix 3). Pastoral Directors will ensure that Attendance Review Meetings with parents/carers take place and an action plan is agreed. This action plan may be designed to ensure compliance with attendance regulations, or may be designed to foster engagement in cases where significant issues have been identified. A record of the meeting will be sent to parents using Letter 3a, 3b or 3c. (Appendix 4, 5 & 6).
- Any student who receives Letter 2 will have their attendance monitored closely every 4-6 weeks. In the event that improvement is not secured a meeting with the Head of

Key Stage or another senior leader will be held. Parents will be informed of this meeting and the possible serious consequences using Letter 4a or 4b (Appendix 7 & 8). Targets will be agreed in the meeting. A record of the meeting will be sent to parents using Letter 3a, 3b or 3c (Appendix 4, 5 or 6).

- If improvement is secured, the parents/carers will be informed using Letter 6 (Appendix 10) and informal monitoring will resume.
- In the event that improvement is not secured letter 5 will be sent (Appendix 9) and a process will be initiated, which may lead to legal proceedings and a Penalty Notice being sought. This will involve Letter 7 (Appendix 11) being sent, following which an application for a Penalty Notice will be submitted by the school to the local authority (Appendix 13).
- If Dame Alice Owen's school feels that a family needs more specialist support in relation to a student's continued pattern of poor attendance, a referral can be made to the County Attendance Team.
- All the processes outlined above are at the discretion of the Deputy Head Teacher with responsibility for attendance and will be implemented according to the context of the individual student.
- Students returning to school after prolonged absence will be supported with their reintegration. This may involve a personalised curriculum.
- **Please note that requests for absence will not be authorised for students whose attendance falls below 95%.**

Lateness

- Students should attend school and remain in school attending all timetable lessons. This means that students should arrive in time for registration. Students who arrive late to school, with no valid reason, will be issued with a same day break time detention. Where a student provides a reason, this will be checked and the detention cancelled if there are adverse conditions that impact the student(s) arriving at school on time. All lateness to school is tracked and monitored and reasons recorded.
- In the case where buses and public transport have incurred delays resulting in the students being late to school, students should sign in at the School Office as soon as they arrive so they can be marked present unless directed otherwise by a member of staff.
- Students who have not been marked present by their form tutor are required to sign in at the Office. They will be asked to explain their late arrival when signing in.
- Avoidable lateness beyond 10.00 am constitutes unauthorised absence and can legally be the basis of an offence by the parent/carer.
- A distinction is drawn between students who arrive late but at the first reasonable opportunity, e.g. after a medical appointment or where there has been genuine transport difficulties and those who are unpunctual.
- Those who are late but who arrive before 10.00am will be counted as present and their attendance will be indicated by an 'L' in the register.
- Those who are late but who arrive after the registration has closed (after 10:00) will be marked with code U
- If we believe the reason for lateness is not genuine, an entry will be made into the student's behaviour log. Please refer to the Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the School at an early stage and work together with staff to resolve any problems. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the School or the parent may refer the child to the Attendance

Improvement Officer (AIO) who will also try to resolve the situation by working directly with the family and school. In some cases, a referral to another agency may be appropriate.

- If attendance remains poor over time following the School's work to improve it in collaboration with parents/carers and the formal involvement of the AIO, the AIO may use legal action.

Illness in School

Students taken ill during lessons should request permission to report to the First Aid office where they will be seen by the First Aid Officer on duty at that time. On **no** account should students telephone their parents requesting that they be collected from school because they are unwell. The School First Aid Officer will decide if a student should go home, in which case they will contact the parents to arrange this. When parents come to collect their child from school they must report to reception from where the child can be collected. Parents should not collect their child from school without signing their child out.

Legal Action

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance at school of registered students (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DfE and the Local Authority. The School aims to work with families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if these absences continue.

Fixed Penalty Notice

If a child is absent from school without the necessary authorisation, the School can apply to the Local Authority, who will then issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notice requires a fine of £60 to be paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within the time limit the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days.

If a parent is issued with a Penalty Notice it enables them to discharge their potential liability for an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 of failure to secure their child's regular attendance at school. If the fine is not paid they will be liable for prosecution for this offence.

Next steps

If a student, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the School fail to secure that student's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action.

A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the student under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the student's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action.

'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating

circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the AIO will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

In cases where parents wilfully withhold a student from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the Integrated Services for Learning Attendance Teams will begin legal proceedings promptly on the grounds that no other course of action is available. The Local Authority will give approval before legal proceedings are commenced.

The Attendance Teams will consider applying for an Education Supervision Order when a parent finds it difficult to exercise an effective influence over a child who has developed a pattern of poor behaviour. Education Supervision Orders will not usually be applied for in relation to students in Years 10 or 11.

Before an application is made for an Education Supervision Order:

- Other possible means of dealing with the student's poor attendance will be explored.
- The attitudes of the parent and student towards the poor attendance, and their wishes as to how it should be dealt with, will be noted.
- The Local Authority will be of the view that the Order will have a significant effect on the student's attendance at school.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with the family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can consider a Families First Assessment, use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Family Support Worker, or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these students; however, we will work with families and students to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all students who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

See Annex A for DfE summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

The name and contact details of the school staff member students and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance:

Name: Mrs V Blackburn, Deputy Headteacher

Email address: admin@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk

Local Authority Attendance Support Team

Local Authority Attendance Support Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents/Carers are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents/Carers should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken which may be in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex B for the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct) or other legal options available to the Local Authority such as prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents/Carers may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued

within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/carer may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

See Annex B for the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct.

There is no entitlement in law for students to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. **The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.**

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or their designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Hertfordshire Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At Dame Alice Owen's School, 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are “rare, significant, unavoidable and short”. By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The Headteacher/School may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents/Carers are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual students or groups of students when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit student attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual students) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent students

are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Annex A

DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19th August 2024:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

Annex B

HERTFORDSHIRE CODE OF CONDUCT: PENALTY NOTICES FOR PARENTS OF TRUANTS AND PARENTS OF PUPILS EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23: [Penalty notices for unauthorised absence | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

Annex C - Illness Absence Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/626669cb8fa8f523b7221b98/UKHSA-should-I-keep-my_child_off_school_guidance-A3-poster.pdf

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

[Wellbeing: national resources - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning \(thegrid.org.uk\)](#)

[Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)



Appendix 1 - Use of Attendance/ Punctuality Letters

The letter sequence outlined below is intended as a guide only. Professional judgement and discretion will be used when responding to individual circumstances.

Attendance dropping below 93%

Letter 1 to be sent by the Attendance Officer.
This letter makes parents aware of our concern



Attendance dropping below 90%

Letter 2 to be sent by the Pastoral Director.
This letter is a request for parents to attend an Attendance Review Meeting



Following the Attendance Review Meeting

The Pastoral Director should send one of the following letters:
Letter 3a - Record of Attendance Review Meeting at which parents were present, followed by letter 8 if attendance improves
Letter 3b (KS3+4) or 3c (Post 16) - Record of Attendance Review Meeting at which parents were not present



Attendance dropping below 85%

The Pastoral Director, will send Letter 4a (KS3+4) or 4b (Post 16), requesting that parents attend a meeting with the with the Pastoral Director, as appropriate.



Following the second Attendance Review Meeting:

The Pastoral Director will then send a follow up letter. This will either:
Letter 5 - Unauthorise absence that has no medical confirmation and set a date for review, or Letter 3a - continue to authorise absence with a date set for review.



Following the Review Date:

The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will send either:
Letter 8 this will communicate that "unauthorised absence" status has ended due to improvement
Or
that "unauthorised absence" status will continue



Attendance remaining below 85%

Students in this category run the risk of having a Penalty Notice imposed. A Penalty Notice can imposed if a student has 10 or more unauthorised sessions in the current or previous term. This process will be managed by the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance. Letter 6 will be sent. These are legal letters and should only be sent by the Deputy Headteacher or the Head Teacher.



The letter sequence outlined below is intended as a guide only. Professional judgement and discretion will be used when responding to individual circumstances.

Punctuality – 6 Lates in a half-term

Letter 1 to be sent by Attendance Officer.
This letter makes parents aware of our concern



Punctuality – 12 Lates

Letter 2 to be sent by Pastoral Director.
This letter is a request for parents to attend an Attendance Review Meeting



Following the Punctuality Review Meeting

The Pastoral Director should send one of the following letters:
Letter 3a - Record of Attendance Review Meeting at which parents were present, followed by letter 8 if attendance improves
Letter 3b (KS3+4) or 3c (Post 16) - Record of Attendance Review Meeting at which parents were not present



Punctuality still not improving

The Pastoral Director, will send Letter 4a (KS3+4) or 4b (Post 16), requesting that parents attend a meeting with the Pastoral Director, as appropriate.



Following the second Punctuality Review Meeting:

The Pastoral Director will then send a follow up letter. This will either:
Letter 5 - Unauthorise absence that has no medical confirmation and set a date for review, or Letter 3a - continue to authorise absence with a date set for review.



Following the Review Date:

The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will send either:
Letter 8 this will communicate that "unauthorised absence" status has ended due to improvement
Or
that "unauthorised absence" status will continue



Punctuality still not improving

Students in this category run the risk of having a Penalty Notice imposed. A Penalty Notice can be imposed if a student has 15 or more unauthorised sessions in the current or previous term. This process will be managed by the Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance. Letter 6 will be sent. These are legal letters and should only be sent by the Deputy Headteacher or the Head Teacher.



Dame Alice Owen's School

Dugdale Hill Lane | Potters Bar | Hertfordshire EN6 2DU

Headteacher | Mrs Hannah Nemko MA

T: 01707 643 441

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admin@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk

www.damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk

Appendix 2/Letter 1 - Attendance/Punctuality - 90-93% attendance

Dear _____

Re <Child's name and DOB>

Dame Alice Owen's School is committed to the achievement of our students and assisting them to fulfil their potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is vital to enable our pupils to accomplish this. At Dame Alice Owen's School, we expect that all students who are able will achieve 96% attendance, I am concerned to note that <child's name> has an attendance rate of < % (under 93%)>

We recognise that sometimes there are good reasons for your child's absence from school and always seek to support families in such circumstances. We also want to support parents to ensure their children attend(s) school regularly and punctually, enabling them to make the most of the educational opportunities available to him/her/them. If <child's name> is experiencing difficulties in school, please contact your child's Pastoral Director.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Director



Dame Alice Owen's School

Dugdale Hill Lane | Potters Bar | Hertfordshire EN6 2DU

Headteacher | Mrs Hannah Nemko MA

T: 01707 643 441

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Appendix 3/Letter 2 - Attendance/Punctuality - Under 90% - Invite to Attendance Review Meeting

Dear _____

Re <Child's name and DOB>

Further to my previous letter, I have been monitoring <child's name> attendance and there has not been an improvement.

<Child's name> has an attendance rate of < %>, still below the school target of 96%. If this attendance rate continues further interventions/ sanctions will need to be implemented.

We would like to work together with you to improve your child's attendance and therefore I invite you to an Attendance Review Meeting <meeting details>. This will be an opportunity for you to explain the issues that have led to this drop in attendance, but it will also be an opportunity for the school to discuss the importance of securing improvements where possible.

If you are unable to attend, a meeting of professionals will take place in your absence and a record of the discussion will be sent to you.

Many thanks for your continued support. Please contact the attendance Officer at school to confirm that you will be attending.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Director



Dame Alice Owen's School

Dugdale Hill Lane | Potters Bar | Hertfordshire EN6 2DU

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Appendix 4/Letter 3a – Letter to Parents following Attendance Review Meeting where the Parent/Carer attended

Dear _____

Re <Child's name and DOB>

Thank you for attending the Attendance Review Meeting on (Date). This was a helpful meeting in which we discussed the issues that have led to <Child's name> attendance falling below 90%.

During the meeting, you outlined the following issues:

To ensure improvements in the coming weeks, we have agreed to:

I hope that this meeting enables us to move forward positively in securing improved attendance for <Child's name>. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and will review the situation on (date, at least six weeks hence).

Thank you for your continued support of your Child and the school

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Director



Appendix 5/Letter 3b – Letter to Parents where there is non attendance at an Attendance Review Meeting (KS3+4)

Dear _____

Re <Child's name and DOB>

I am sorry that you were unable to attend the Attendance Review Meeting on (date) to discuss <Child's name> poor attendance to school. As advised in my previous letter, a meeting of professionals was undertaken in your absence. Present at the meeting were (names and responsibilities).

We continue to be concerned about level of absence during this academic year. As stated in previous letters, we are sympathetic to and support absence from school where there is a genuine need for this to occur. However, we are equally committed to ensuring the best levels of attendance from all students.

Following discussion, the professionals present decided on the following strategies to support (name) in improving their attendance:

Please be aware that if your child's attendance does not improve, this may result in the school making an application to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued to you.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/carer may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, you would receive a criminal conviction.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, I encourage you to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Director



Dame Alice Owen's School

Dugdale Hill Lane | Potters Bar | Hertfordshire EN6 2DU

Headteacher | Mrs Hannah Nemko MA

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F: 01707 645 011

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Appendix 6/Letter 3c – Letter to Parents where there is non-attendance at an Attendance Review Meeting (Post 16)

Dear _____

Re <Child's name and DOB>

I am sorry that you were unable to attend the Attendance Review Meeting on (date) to discuss <Child's name> poor attendance to school. As advised in my previous letter, a meeting of professionals was undertaken in your absence. Present at the meeting were (names and responsibilities).

We continue to be concerned about level of absence during this academic year. As stated in previous letters, we are sympathetic to and support absence from school where there is a genuine need for this to occur. However, we are equally committed to ensuring the best levels of attendance from all students.

Following discussion, the professionals present decided on the following strategies to support (name) in improving their attendance:

Please be aware that if your Child's attendance does not improve, we will have to proceed with next steps.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, I encourage you to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Head of Year 12 /13



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Appendix 7/Letter 4a - Attendance/Punctuality - Under 85% - Invite to Attendance Review Meeting with Deputy Headteacher/ Senior Leader (KS3+4)

Dear _____

Re <Child's name and DOB>

I am writing to inform you that an appointment has been made for you to meet with me on (date). It is essential that you attend this appointment. An excellent level of attendance at school, as I am sure you are aware, is a legal requirement. <Child's name> attendance is (%), well below the school target of 96%.

Your child's attendance has reached a level that means we may need to consider making an application to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued to you. If a pupil has at least 10 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term, including holidays where parents/carers understand that permission had not/would not be given, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. This can be for each parent/carer for each child. £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/carer may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, you would receive a criminal conviction.

Alternatively, a referral to an Attendance Improvement Officer at Hertfordshire County Council, when legal proceedings may be considered.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss how the school can support you in ensuring that your Child's attendance improves and we are determined to ensure that we see an improvement as the year progresses. We are much more likely to achieve this with your support and cooperation and therefore look forward to seeing you on the above date.

If you are unable to attend, a meeting of professionals will take place in your absence and a record of the discussion will be sent to you. It is highly likely that your non-attendance at this meeting will result in stronger interventions being implemented.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Headteacher



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Appendix 8/Letter 4b - Attendance/Punctuality - Under 85% - Invite to Attendance Review Meeting with Deputy Headteacher/ Senior Leader (Post 16)

Dear _____

Re <Child's name and DOB>

I am writing to inform you that an appointment has been made for you to meet with me on (date). It is essential that you attend this appointment. An excellent level of attendance at school, as I am sure you are aware, is a legal requirement. <Child's name> attendance is (%), well below the school target of 96%.

Your Child's attendance has reached a level that means we may need to discuss her future at Dame Alice Owen's School Sixth Form, as references in the Post 16 Attendance Agreement.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss how the school can support you in ensuring that your child's attendance improves and we are determined to ensure that we see an improvement as the year progresses. We are much more likely to achieve this with your support and cooperation and therefore look forward to seeing you on the above date.

If you are unable to attend, a meeting of professionals will take place in your absence and a record of the discussion will be sent to you. It is highly likely that your non-attendance at this meeting will result in stronger interventions being implemented.

Yours sincerely

Head of Sixth Form (Assistant Headteacher)



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Appendix 9/Letter 5 – Letter to Parents where absences are to be unauthorised (KS3+4 only)

Dear _____

Re: <Child's name and DOB>

Dame Alice Owen's School is committed to the achievement of our pupils and assisting them to fulfil their potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is vital to enable our pupils to accomplish this. Therefore, I am concerned to note that following my previous correspondence and our meeting of <date>, <Child's name> has an attendance rate of <%> and has only completed <number> full weeks of school out of <number> possible weeks.

Further absence will remain unauthorised by the school. It is a legal responsibility for parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. Should there be unauthorised absence the school will need to consider further action. This could be a Penalty Notice. If a pupil has at least 10 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term, including holidays where parents/carers understand that permission had not/would not be given, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. This can be for each parent/carer for each child. £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/carer may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, you would receive a criminal conviction.

The registering of absences as unauthorised will be reviewed on <date>. Should you provide medical confirmation that <Child's name> absence is due to illness this enables the school to authorise the absence and consider support if appropriate.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Headteacher



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Appendix 10/ Letter 6 - Improving Attendance/Punctuality – continue to review attendance

Dear _____

Re <child's name and DOB>

Further to my letter dated _____, I have been monitoring <child's name> attendance (and/or punctuality).

Our aim is for our pupils/students to achieve over 96% attendance. <Child's name> has increased from _____% to _____%. I will review the figure until attendance is over 95% for an 8 week period.

Should there be any issues regarding attendance in the future, please contact me. Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Pastoral Director



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Appendix 11 /Letter 7 – Letter to inform Parents that the school are going to apply for a fixed penalty notice

Dear _____

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Re <Child's name and DOB> Registered at ----- (school name)

This is a formal warning that you are at risk of being in breach of the regulations stated above. <Child's name> has been absent from school and the absence(s) has/have not been authorised.

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 10 or more in the current and/or previous term you will be in breach of the regulations and the Local Authority may issue you with a penalty notice. If a pupil has at least 10 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term, including holidays where parents/carers understand that permission had not/would not be given, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. This can be for each parent/carer for each child. £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/carer may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, you would receive a criminal conviction.

Payment of the penalty enables you to discharge your liability for the offence for the period in question of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. (section 444, The Education Act 1996).

The Local Authority will ask for costs of £125 to be awarded against you. If you fail to ensure your child attends regularly and 10 sessions of unauthorised absence is reached a penalty notice will be issued. You will not receive a further warning before the penalty is imposed. If you believe there are legitimate reasons for your child's absence please contact me within 5 working days to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



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Appendix 12 /Letter 8 – Letter to inform Parents that the school are going to apply for a fixed penalty notice where the Parent has removed the child from the country without seeking permission from the school

Dear _____

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Re <Child's name and DOB> Registered at ----- (school name)

This is a formal warning that you are at risk of being in breach of the regulations stated above. <Child's name> has been absent from school and we have information to suggest your daughter is out of the country during term time. This absence(s) has/have not been authorised by us.

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 10 or more in the current and/or previous term you will be in breach of the regulations and the Local Authority may issue you with a penalty notice. If a pupil has at least 10 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term, including holidays where parents/carers understand that permission had not/would not be given, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. This can be for each parent/carer for each child. £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/carer may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, you would receive a criminal conviction.

Payment of the penalty enables you to discharge your liability for the offence for the period in question of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. (Section 444, The Education Act 1996).

The Local Authority will ask for costs of £125 to be awarded against you. If you fail to ensure your child attends regularly and 15 sessions of unauthorised absence is reached a penalty notice will be issued. You will not receive a further warning before the penalty is imposed. If you believe there are legitimate reasons for your child's absence please contact me within 5 working days to discuss the matter.

If your Child does not return to resume their education at Dame Alice Owen's School by ____ (Date) ____ then we will send notification to the local authority that your Child is Missing In Education and they may be removed from the school roll.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



Appendix 13 – Application to Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty notice

Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire County Council

Children's Services

Statutory Attendance Support Team

Unauthorised Absence Application for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Name of person requesting issue of Penalty Notice:	
Position: (Head, Deputy or Assistant Head only)	
Contact details:	
Name of person completing application:	
Pupil's Name & UPN:	
Date of Birth:	
Date pupil started at school:	
School/Academy:	
Parent/Carer full name and relationship to child:	
Address:	
Email address:	
Telephone:	

Please confirm the following:	
1. You have read the Code of Conduct, and this application complies	Y/N
2. Confirmation that all absences are within a rolling period of 10 weeks	Y/N
3. You have included evidence that the issue of a Penalty Notice will change parental behaviour	Y/N
4. You have exhausted all avenues of support, including the offer of a Families First Assessment	Y/N
5. Please confirm who will provide a witness statement and/or attend court as required – Name: Designation:	
6. You have sent each parent the Factsheet with the Notice to Improve letter	Y/N

Please provide the following evidence:	
1. Clear details of the “support first” approach which has been taken by schools/partners to identify the reasons for the pupil's absence, any barriers impacting the pupil's attendance and all support strategies which have been offered (whether engaged with by parent/s or not) to remove any such barriers.	
2. Copies of all letters/emails sent to the parent/s to advise of the concerns held in relation to their child's absence levels.	
3. Copies of all letters/emails sent and/or details of all telephone calls which have been made to arrange meetings with the parent/s to establish the reasons for absence and identify	



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what support may be needed to improve attendance patterns and prevent further unauthorised absence.

4. A copy of any attendance support plans which have been agreed with parent/s and whether these have been adhered to.
5. A link to the school's Attendance Policy which makes clear the escalation process which may be applied in cases of unresolved irregular school attendance, including the risk of legal action under this code of conduct/section 444 Education 1996.
6. A copy of the Notice to Improve which has been issued to each parent, individually, if applicable. If sent by letter, this must be on school letterhead, dated, addressed to each individual parent and proof of posting must be included. If sent by email, this must be to each parent's individual e-mail address and delivery/read receipts must be requested.
7. Where a Notice to Improve has not been issued, schools will be required to share their reasons why.
8. Where a Notice to Improve has not been issued, a copy of the letter or email to parent/s advising them that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice, should further unauthorised absence be recorded for their child.
9. A copy of the registration certificate, signed by the applicant clearly showing that the national threshold has been met and that the appropriate coding has been used to allow for a penalty notice to be issued.

Please note that applications will not be processed if the necessary information is not attached.

Please email this application **within 10 school days of the last absence** to the Penalty Notice Officer for the area where the school is based.

All applications to be sent via Herts/Schools FX as follows –

West Area – attendancedutywest@hertfordshire.gov.uk

East Area – attendancedutyeast@hertfordshire.gov.uk



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Appendix 14 - ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Attending any other approved education activity	Present
C	Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances (school discretion)	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Not a possible attendance
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Authorised absence
K	Attending Education provision arranged by LA	Present
L	Late (arrival before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence
P	Participating in Sporting Activity	Present
Q	Unable to attend school due to lack of access arrangements	Not a possible attendance
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Attending an Educational visit or trip	Present
W	Attending Work experience	Present
X	Non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	Not counted in possible attendances
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not a possible attendance



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Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances



Appendix 15

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at school are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.



Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, but only when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J1: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C, C1 & C2: Leave of absence authorised by the school



Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code C: Extended family holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers may in exceptional circumstances agree more than 10 school days leave of absence in a school year. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

Code C: Family holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers may in special^{*} circumstances grant leave of absence of up to 10 days for the purpose of family holidays during term time. The application must be made in which warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify the school as soon as possible when a child is ill. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the seriousness of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical certificates unnecessarily (particularly retrospective certificates), especially if the illness was not treated by a doctor at the time. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code K: This code is to be used if the pupil is attending an education provision arranged by the LA. The nature of the provision should also be recorded.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.



Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

* The current regulations states that head teachers can grant requests from parents to take their child on family holiday during term time in "special" circumstances. The Government has accepted Charlie Taylor's recommendation that changes are made to the pupil registration regulations to strengthen the rules around term time holidays. The Government intends to do so by September 2013.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.



Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code P: This code is to be used if the pupil is present but participating in a sporting activity

Code Q: This code is to be used if the pupil is unable to attend due to access arrangements

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Codes Y1-Y7: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in a criminal justice detention.
- The pupil is unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.



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Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.



Appendix 16 – Letter to be sent to all parents annually

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: School Attendance and Punctuality

At Dame Alice Owen's School we want all of our students to enjoy school and achieve their potential. We are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Our attendance target is 96% and our aim is for our students to exceed this level, enabling them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and improve their future life chances. We would appreciate your support to ensure that your daughter achieves this.

Our School Attendance Policy can be found on the school's website. As part of this policy, the school would like to keep parents informed regarding attendance and will contact parents in writing when attendance drops below 93%.

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, punctually and ready to learn. Children with attendance under 90% are classified by the Department for Education as Persistent Absentees.

If your daughter/son is absent from school, please contact us on each day of the absence and provide the reason. On return to school the reason for your daughter/son's absence should be confirmed in writing and passed to their form tutor. It is the Head Teacher's decision as to whether this absence is authorised or not. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register.

The school day consists of two sessions, the morning and the afternoon. Registers are taken twice daily at 8.45 am and 13.40pm. In the mornings, the registers close at 9.30am. Should your child arrive after the register has been closed, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless a reasonable explanation is provided. The school will follow up lateness, unauthorised absence and students with low levels of attendance.

Ongoing poor attendance and/or punctuality may result in the school making a request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice (explanation below) or a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer when court proceedings may be considered.

If a student has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, including leave of absence where permission has not been requested or requested and denied, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are sent to each parent for each child. Parents can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the penalty. Should the fine not be paid in full within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecution.



Dame Alice Owen's School

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Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that 'Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances', outlining the conditions under which leave of absence may be granted. Should parents/carers need to request leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. A copy of the relevant form is on the school website and return it to me no less than 4 weeks before the date that you are requesting the period of absence to start. I will inform you of my decision in writing and may request an appointment with you.

May I remind you that the school operates Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence of 15 or more sessions across the current and/or previous term. Leave of absence will be unauthorised:

1. should a request for leave of absence be declined but the time taken
2. if a parent/carer takes a child out of school for leave of absence without requesting permission
3. when a child fails to return to school following authorised leave of absence for exceptional circumstances on the agreed date.

Unauthorised leave of absence of 15 or more sessions may lead to a Penalty Notice being initiated. Further information can be found in the school's Attendance Policy and on our website.

Our aim is to work with you and our students to ensure that the courses of action, outlined above, are not necessary. Students are regularly praised and rewarded for improved and good attendance and punctuality and we look forward to working together with you to support the future of your daughter/son.

Yours sincerely

Mrs H Nemko
Headteacher