

# AGGS

## **BRIGHT FUTURES PUPIL ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE & PROCEDURES**

*(To be read in conjunction with Bright Futures Pupil Attendance Policy)*

**These are the specific pupil attendance guidance and procedures for Altrincham Grammar School for Girls. The overarching policy can be found in the Trust Policies section of the website.**

## Contents

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
Aims	3
Legislation and guidance	3
School procedures	3
Strategies for promoting attendance	4
Attendance monitoring	5
Lateness and punctuality	6
Following up absence	6
Authorised and unauthorised absence	7
Children at risk of missing education	8
Students leaving the school and removal from roll	8
Appendix 1: The procedure by which the School determines unauthorised absence	9

## 1. Aims

- To ensure that overall school attendance is 97% or higher
- To raise the profile of the importance of high-level attendance among students, parents and other staff
- To outline a procedure for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies
- To eradicate persistent lateness
- To explain the legal processes for persistent lateness and absence

## 2. Legislation and guidance

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens - either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. As a last resort, schools and local authorities have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

The school seeks to operate in ways which maximise student potential while supporting parents in meeting their legal requirements.

The school fulfils its responsibilities: by taking a morning and afternoon session registration; by being open for the required school days, unless prevented by extreme weather or other unforeseen exceptional circumstance; and by using the nationally recognised attendance codes.

## 3. School procedures

### 3.1. Attendance register

In line with Department for Education guidance, AGGS will take the attendance register at **8.40 am**. The morning register will close at 9.05 am, meaning any subsequent student arrival will be coded as an unauthorised absence unless there is sufficient reason for this to be authorised.

### 3.2. Unplanned absence

If a student is absent from school, it is vital that a parent contacts the school at the earliest opportunity to provide a reason for absence, and no later than 9.05 am. Primarily, student absence should be communicated via the Edulink app or by telephoning the school absence line 0161 912 5912 (option 3 for main school and option 2 for sixth form).

Absence can only be authorised where there is good cause. If no adequate reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised. The decision and authority to authorise an absence lies with the school, in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996. Parents cannot authorise absence. Where deemed necessary, the school reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness. After five days of authorised absence across the academic year, or three days of consecutive authorised absence, the school may unauthorise all subsequent absence. The process by which the school determines authorisation of absence can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.3. Medical or dental appointments

It is an expectation of the school that medical and dental appointments are taken out of school time. Missing lessons, even for medical and dental appointments, has a detrimental impact on student progress

and achievement.

The school recognises that it is not always possible to schedule appointments out of school time. On the rare occasion that a student must attend a medical appointment during school time, parents should complete the electronic request form on the school website, giving as much detail as possible, including associated evidence, of the circumstances leading to the request. Parents will receive a response notifying them of the decision.

Patterns of medical and dental appointments during school sessions over a period of time will result in further follow up investigation and action. Regardless of the reason, all medical appointments are recorded as an absence, and will impact upon the student's overall attendance percentage.

### **EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE (EBSNA)**

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) is a term used to describe children and young people who experience challenges in attending school due to negative feelings (such as anxiety). Where there are emotional, or mental health reasons for non-attendance, school will work with students and parents/carers at the earliest possible opportunity to try to understand the barriers to attendance, and where possible, to develop a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to overcome these barriers and support to maximise face-to-face attendance. A plan will be formulated and after implementation will be regularly reviewed.

Where a student has been absent for 15 days (consecutive or in total due to emotional health) school will notify the Local Authority.

Where in-school pastoral and/or external specialist support is facilitated but not engaged with, school will work with the Local Authority to determine whether to formalise support or to enforce through legal intervention. In instances of long-term or repeated absence for EBSNA, school will seek medical evidence to assist in assessing whether additional support is needed.

### **4. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Attendance is a whole school initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, students and all members of school staff.

The table below highlights the whole school approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. This is led by the Strategic Attendance Lead – Vice Principal, Ms R Bond - who works with school staff to monitor and improve attendance, while raising the profile and emphasising the importance of attendance at individual and whole school level.

<b>Colour</b>	<b>Attendance %</b>	<b>Concern</b>
Green	97-100%	No concern - best chance of academic success
Yellow	95-96.9%	Concern - risk of underachievement
Amber	93-94.9%	Serious risk of underachievement
Pink	90-92.9%	Severe risk of underachievement
Red	0-89.9%	Extreme risk - persistent absentee

In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement, the school uses a range of rewards and positive reinforcement strategies. As appropriate to student age these include:

- Regular celebration of year group and form group attendance in year group assemblies led by the pastoral team.

- Merits and certificates for 100% attendance and best form attendance every half-term
- Merits, certificates, and badges for 100% attendance annually
- Celebration events such as rewards trips and movie afternoons
- Letters and text messages home.

## 5. Attendance monitoring

The school has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in response to attendance concerns.

Contact on the first day of absence is a priority in this school. The pastoral assistant/sixth form administrator will contact the parents/carers of any student who is absent without notification on the first morning of the absence. The pastoral assistant /sixth form administrator will keep records of any absences. Attendance data will be shared with Senior Tutors each week. In the case of a student whose absences are a cause for concern, that is a student whose attendance is dropping below an acceptable level for this school for no apparent reason, the school will make use of the escalation guidance below.

Where a student has had ten consecutive days of absence, a home visit will be arranged for safeguarding purposes.

The principles underpinning the model will be used to promote consistency both across the different year groups of compulsory school age and within each year group. In summary, these are as follows:

- The attendance statistics for each year group and form group in the school will be displayed regularly in assembly.
- Attendance matters will receive positive reinforcement in assemblies and form time.
- The Senior Tutor is responsible for the overview of attendance in their group; however, they are supported by other staff from the Pastoral Team, and other school staff.

### Escalation Guidance

1. **97% - 100%, or increased attendance**- Students in this group are in the best possible position to achieve their full potential in GCSEs, leading to secure their potential. Senior tutors will celebrate these students regularly, and the school will recognise and reinforce their level of attendance.
2. **Yellow 95% – 96.9%, or an initial fall in attendance** - Students in this group will receive intervention and support from their form tutor to increase their attendance to above 97%. This will be in the form of a letter home and a meeting between the student and form tutor.
3. **Amber 93% - 94.9%, or consecutive weeks of falling attendance** - Students in this group will receive intervention and support from their Assistant Senior Tutor or Senior Tutor to increase their attendance to above 95%. This will be in the form of a letter home and a meeting between the student and the Senior Tutor.
4. **Pink 90% - 92.9%, or repeated consecutive or non-consecutive weeks of falling attendance** - Students in this group will receive intervention and support from the Senior Tutor to increase their attendance. At this point, as the student is close to falling below the Government Persistent Absentee rate, a phone call will be made to parents.
5. **Red 0 - 89.9%, or persistent consecutive or non-consecutive weeks of falling attendance** - Students in this group will receive intervention and support from the Lead Senior Tutor, Vice Principal or Head

of Sixth Form as well as the wider Senior Leadership Team. This will be in the form of a letter home, meeting with the Lead Senior Tutor, Vice Principal or Head of Sixth Form, and a support plan. As this attendance percentage continues to fall below the Government Persistent Absence target, the school will report the absence to Trafford Local Authority and, following advice from Trafford, we will also offer advice and support to the parents/carers and work together to support the student's wellbeing. We may require parents/carers to sign a parent contract to indicate their support of school's attendance policy. If the student's attendance does not improve, and in accordance with the Trafford guidelines on attendance, the school may commence formal legal proceedings which will start with the parents/carers being issued with a penalty notice on behalf of Trafford Local Authority. This may be followed by the issue of a parenting order. If there continues to be no improvement there may follow a prosecution by the Department for Education.

In cases where there is concern regarding the level of attendance for sixth form students (attendance below 90%) the form tutor, senior tutor and Head of Sixth Form will consider action to support the student to improve their attendance and contact will be made with parents / carers. Students may be set targets to improve their attendance, lose privileges (eg being asked to sign in at the sixth form library during free periods) or be issued with a sixth form contract. In cases where attendance does not improve, a further disciplinary action, involving the Head of Sixth Form, Principal and parents/carers, will be taken. Sixth form students in receipt of 16-19 bursary are made aware that payment of the bursary is dependent on good attendance. Payments may be affected by poor attendance and any periods of unauthorised absence.

To support this process, the pastoral team will meet weekly to discuss students whose attendance is declining. A series of actions to support improvement will be agreed, delegated and recorded.

## **6. Lateness and punctuality**

It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. This can only be achieved if a student attends regularly and punctually. The school expects all students to arrive at registrations and sessions on time. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. A student arriving late will disrupt not only their own continuity of learning but also that of others.

All students should arrive at school by 8.40 am each day when registration begins. It is important that all students make a good start to the day and are ready to learn. If a student arrives after 8.40 am but before 10.05am (when registers close) they will be given a late mark (L), after this time students will be marked with a U code (unless they are attending a medical appointment. Procedures are in place if a student is late on several occasions. For more than 4 lates, an after-school detention will be issued.

Parents of a student who is not present in school will be notified of their absence. Parents have the responsibility to inform AGGS of student absence. It is a safeguarding priority for us to know the whereabouts of all students.

Absences will be followed up through the attendance intervention system, which will include, but is not limited:

- i. Phone calls to parents/guardians
- ii. Attendance letters
- iii. Meetings with pastoral and senior leaders
- iv. Home visits
- v. Attendance trackers

- vi. Attendance contracts

## **7. Reporting to parents and carers**

In order to support parents in meeting their legal requirements and to maximise individual student attendance, the school seeks to keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and to actively involve parents on attendance issues. Methods include:

- Unexplained/unaccounted for absence letter asking for reasons
- Escalating letters warning of concerns
- Parental meetings
- Attendance percentages included on student reports and reported annually
- Discussion at Parents' Meetings/Evenings

## **8. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **8.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

In order to maximise individual achievement, parents should avoid making routine appointments for students during the school day. Parents should not take family holidays during the term time period and will not be authorised.

Parents should be advised that leave of absence can only be authorised at the discretion of the Principal and will only be agreed in very exceptional circumstances. Further information regarding this can be found in the Bright Futures Educational Trust Attendance and Punctuality Policy. On the rare occasion that absence is requested, parents/carers should complete the electronic request form on the school website, giving as much detail as possible, including associated evidence, of the circumstances leading to the request. Parents will receive an automated response notifying them of the decision. When a request has been refused, any absence during that period will be recorded as unauthorised absence. School may commence formal proceedings by issuing parents/carers with a penalty notice on behalf of Trafford Local Authority where leave is taken following a request being refused.

### **8.2 Legal sanctions**

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends the school on a regular and punctual basis. Should any student's attendance or punctuality become a concern, they will be subject to an Education Welfare referral. The school and Trafford Local Authority will work in partnership where legal action is required.

Legal action includes:

- **Penalty Notice:** A Penalty Notice may be issued for each student who has unauthorised absence or lateness. Following 6 sessions of unauthorised absence, a Penalty Warning Letter will be issued. There will be a review for three weeks, and should the student's attendance continue to decline, a Penalty Notice will be issued once the pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.

A fixed penalty notice can be issued without warning in circumstances whereby:

- A leave of absence of 5 days (10 sessions) or more was taken during term time without the school's consent.
- If an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken and there have been instances of previous unauthorised absences in an 8-week period. This can be one day.
- Where a parent has taken the pupil on holiday during term-time with the school's authorisation and has failed to return the pupil to school on the date agreed.

- The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 42-day period, a prosecution will be sought.
- Prosecution for unauthorised absence: It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at their school. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. If a student's attendance continues to decline, and unauthorised absence increases despite efforts by the school to support the pupil in attending school, a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service, upon which a Court Panel meeting will be convened.

Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

## **9. Attendance and examinations**

Students are expected to attend all internal/external examinations. For information regarding external examinations at a different examination centre, please refer to the Examinations Policy. Students who intend to sit an examination elsewhere during the school day should apply for leave of absence.

## **10. Children at Risk of Missing Education**

Policies and guidance related to children at risk of missing education can be found in the Pupil Attendance Policy.

The contact for Local Authority Attendance issues is [pupil.absence@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:pupil.absence@trafford.gov.uk) .

## **11. Students leaving the school and Removal from Roll**

AGGS has a commitment to safeguard students. Therefore, destination of all students who leave the school will be tracked.

School leaders will ensure that detailed records are kept for students who stop attending the school and are removed from the roll/admissions register.



## Appendix 1: The procedure by which the school determines unauthorised absence

