



AYLESBURY HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Status	Non - Statutory	Date created	November 2006
Any other statutory names for this policy (where applicable)		Date first approved	November 2006
Responsibility for this policy (job title)	Assistant Head	Date last reviewed	February 2017
Governors' Committee with responsibility for its review	T&L	Frequency of review	Three Years
Tick here if Bucks Policy attached in its entirety		To be put on the school website? (Yes/No)	Yes
Approval necessary	Sub-committee only		

Introduction

At Aylesbury High School, we place great importance on good attendance which is crucial in helping students to fulfil their academic potential. Research shows that 'there appears to be a significant association between authorised and unauthorised absence and attainment at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, even when pupil and school level characteristics have been taken into account.' [NFER 2005] Although this particular research did not investigate Sixth Form students, our own observations suggest that there appears to be a similar correlation in this age group.

The Codes of Conduct regarding Fixed Penalty Notices for Buckinghamshire as well as our neighbouring counties have been referred to when putting together this policy.

Average levels of attendance at the school over the past few years have remained above 95%. This equates to one day off every four weeks. We regard attendance under this level as a cause for concern, and the School may contact parents informally if it drops below 90%. In Years 7 to 11, if a student's attendance over a period of five weeks is under 85% and causing concern, we will write to parents/carers about our duty to alert the County Attendance Team. If attendance does not subsequently improve, action will be taken with external agencies as appropriate.

Students are expected to be on site and in tutor rooms by 8.45am each morning. Students who arrive before 8am, or who are on site after the end of the school day and not in supervised clubs with members of staff, should wait in the canteen.

Authorisation of Student Absence

The High Court has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. A student's attendance forms part of their official school record. Schools have some discretion to authorise planned absences, and are advised to publish guidelines to parents, but retain the right to be flexible in individual cases. What follows is a guide to how reasons for student absence should be communicated to the school, and the school's likely decisions about authorisation.

Unauthorised Absence

This is absence where the school has not received a reason or the explanation offered is not accepted as satisfactory justification. This could include, but is not limited to, family holidays, leisure activities, birthdays, looking after younger siblings, driving lessons and non-medical appointments.

Illness or other unforeseen absences

On every day of unforeseen absence, parents contact the school's absence line on 01296 388230.

1. Absences of up to four days

If these four days are the only days of absence, and a telephone call has been made on each of the days using the number above, no further written note is needed.

2. Absences of five days or more

For longer absences, parents should continue to use the absence line to keep the school informed. **When the student returns to school, parents should email their Pastoral Support Assistant explaining the absence.** Addresses can be found on the final page of this policy. All emails should be clearly marked with the student's name, form, dates and reason for absence.

3. Absence of ten days or more

If a student is absent without a satisfactory explanation for 10 consecutive days, we have a legal duty to report the absence to the County Attendance Team.

4. Persistent Absence (<85% attendance)

Where a student has persistent absence for medical reasons, evidence from a medical professional (e.g. GP, CAMHS professional, consultant physician) will be required at regular intervals.

If a student's attendance falls below 85%, with at least 10% unauthorised absence over a 5 week period, we will issue a Formal Warning Letter. Attendance will be closely monitored over the next four weeks and if it doesn't improve we will liaise with the relevant county to consider initiating the procedure to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice by putting in a request to the County Attendance Team and following their Code of Conduct. If the student's attendance fails to improve or she is continuously absent for more than 20 school days without contact, we will consider setting up a Parenting Contract. The County Attendance Team may consider further legal action in accordance with their Code of Conduct.

Truancy

Truancy is an absence from school caused by the student's own free will. It will be classed as an unauthorised absence and sanctions will be applied according to our Behaviour and Exclusions Policy, as well as following the protocol set out above. Parents will be informed if a student is found to be truanting. A Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued if the truancy is repeated.

Catching up with work

For absences of a week or less, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with work that she has missed. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, please contact the Year Head who will arrange for work to be sent home.

Illness at School

If a student is ill in school, she should report to Matron who will decide whether or not to contact parents. ***Students are not permitted to call parents themselves in this instance. If parents do receive a call from their daughter, they should tell them to go to Matron and then call the school to speak to her directly. Under no circumstances should students be collected from school without our knowledge.***

All such absences will usually be authorised.

Planned Absences during Term Time

1. Medical and Dental Appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be made outside school time whenever possible. If a student *does* have to leave school for an appointment, the appointment should be made at the beginning or end of the day so that not too much school is missed.

Whenever possible, a note should be shown to the form tutor in advance of the appointment and then carried on the day to show to the teacher whose lesson the student will be leaving.

Whenever a student leaves the school site, **she must sign out at reception to ensure that her absence is taken into account in the event of an emergency.**

This type of absence will usually be authorised.

Please note: For all the following types of planned absence, a Leave of Absence Form (available online from the 'Parents' section of the website) should be completed by the parent.

2. Pantomimes and Other Licensed Productions

If a student is involved in a production which involves rehearsals and performances during school time, the school will **consider** authorising absence of up to 10 days **as long as the production is licensed.** A Leave of Absence Form should be completed. If the student's attendance is below average or the school has significant concerns about the impact this absence would have on her progress, the absence will not be authorised. No such absences will be authorised during the run up to examination periods, or during mock exams.

3. Other Planned Absences

Requests for a planned day of absence, for example to attend a family ceremony or music examination, should be made **a month in advance on a Leave of Absence Form.** The student's Year Head will be flexible in cases where such notice is not possible. The school will consider the request, taking into account the reasons given and the student's attendance record. The table on page 4 contains examples of the school's likely decision. Where a month's notice has been given, the parent will be notified of the school's decision by email.

4. Holidays

From 1 September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances, and holidays are not considered exceptional. Requests for leave must also be made to the school in advance, as the Department for Education has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

Requests will be dealt with on an individual basis; your daughter's attendance record as well as the reasons given on the Leave of Absence form will be taken into account. **No absences will be authorised during the run up to examination periods, or during mock exams.** Where a month's notice has been provided, you will be notified of the school's decision by email.

Any absences not approved will be recorded as unauthorised.

Sixth Form Attendance

Unforeseen Absences

In Years 12 and 13, students should follow the policy for the rest of the school. After three days of unexplained absence, investigations will be made with parents. Failure to provide satisfactory explanations of absence in the Sixth Form will result in sanctions being applied and privileges being withdrawn.

Planned Absences

Planned absences must be handled in the same way as the rest of the school. Year 12 students may have up to 5 days' planned absence authorised to include open days and university visits. Students should try, where possible, to space these visits so that they are not too close together or on the same day of the week. Year 13 students, following a firm university offer, are sometimes invited to a specialist open day. This will be authorised.

Contact details for Pastoral Support Assistants

r-ray@ahs.bucks.sch.uk for Years 7-9

l-faulkner@ahs.bucks.sch.uk for Years 10-11

v-powton@ahs.bucks.sch.uk for Years 12-13

Examples of Requests and the School's Likely Decision:

Funerals and other significant family events	Will authorise
Attendance at sporting events (e.g. Wimbledon) or local agricultural shows	Will not authorise
Participation in sporting or artistic events not arranged by the school	Will consider authorisation depending on nature of event and attendance record of student*
Theatrical performances and related rehearsals	Will consider authorisation if child performance licence granted, depending on timing and attendance record of student*
Family holiday having to be taken in term time because of one parent's working arrangements	Will not authorise
Day or days at the start or end of terms to allow for flight availability etc.	Will not authorise
Planned absence for any reason at the start of the academic year, in the run up to external examinations, during periods of controlled assessments or school exam periods	Will not authorise

*The average attendance rate for students in Years 7-11 is approximately 95% at Aylesbury High School. Students with attendance rates below this are unlikely to be granted authorised leave of absence for this type of request.