



ALDERLEY EDGE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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07 September 2021

Dear Parents

Absence and Lateness

As it is the start of a new school year, the Governing Body would like to remind all families of the guidelines and expectations regarding attendance. The attendance policy can be found on the school website - <https://www.aecps.org/school-essentials/policies-and-forms>

Despite the implications of COVID 19, the expectations around attendance remain the same. As the guidance for parents states, "It is vital that children and young people return to school and college, for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. School attendance is mandatory. This means that it is your legal duty as a parent to send your child (if they are of compulsory school age) to school regularly."

I will now remind you of the detail around the advice in relation to attendance and punctuality and the impact this has had on school policy.

Attendance

It is well known that poor attendance will impact on children's learning as well as their sense of well-being, sense of belonging and establish life-long habits for good attendance in general. The following figures show clearly how time lost cannot be regained:

- *98% attendance means that your child has missed 4 days in the school year*
- *95% attendance means that your child has missed 10 days in the school year*
- *90% attendance means that your child has missed 19 days in the school year*
- *80% attendance means that your child has missed 38 days in the school year*
- *5 minutes late each day means three whole days lost each year*
- *17 days missed from school each year equates to a whole GCSE grade*
- *Attendance affects learning, future earning, wellbeing and a sense of belonging*

Help us to help your child, or children, to do well at school. They must attend school regularly and time is not taken to visit family, take holidays or remain off school due to late nights to watch films on TV, football matches or attend concerts.

The legislation does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. Previously head teachers were able to authorise pupil absence during term time – this option has now been removed. Unfortunately family celebrations (such as weddings and

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anniversaries), birthdays, siblings' school holidays not coinciding and parental work commitments do not constitute as exceptional.

The advice is now clear and unauthorised absence of more than 10 sessions (5 school days) should result in a fixed penalty notice. These do not have to be consecutive days i.e. it could be 5 days over two consecutive half-term periods.

We have also been advised that even if the child has had outstanding attendance during the previous year that this must not be taken into consideration and that the decision to authorise or not should be purely based on the circumstance relating to the application.

In the future, therefore, if your child has more than this period of time away from school and the absence is deemed to be unauthorised then the advice we have received states that a FPN should be issued.

Previously, applications were made to apply Fixed Penalty Notices to some families following poor attendance and one of these resulted not only in a FPN but further legal processes with costs of approx. £1000.

The FPN charges are listed below. Please note - the LA issue the FPN at the school's request and the fine is paid to the LA not to the school.

Penalties for unauthorised absence

Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	<i>The parent(s) will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrate's Court on the grounds of having failed to secure their child's regular attendance</i>	<i>The parent(s) will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrate's Court on the grounds of having failed to secure their child's regular attendance</i>

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It is also worth noting that if a child's absence fell below 90% it was classed as persistent absence. This has an impact on any external judgement of the school, as well as the child and their family. It may result in intervention from the Education Welfare Officer.

In previous years, there were several cases where anecdotal (and at times this was backed up by hard evidence) that some parents lied or got their child to lie about their absence. However, asking your child to lie is both deceitful and can cause distress to a child as staff will always check on the well-being of your child if they have been off school with sickness.

If your flight is delayed then this is not a problem. Simply ensure you provide the original booking details when the retrospective application is made so I can authorise this absence.

Lateness

Children who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own learning but also that of others as it requires additional time away from the rest of the class for the teacher to re-explain to the late child what input has already been given. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken in line with action outlined to deal with absence.

With regard to absence and lateness there is some room for discretion in granting an attendance where the child has arrived at the first reasonable opportunity (for example after a medical appointment or where there has been a genuine one-off transport difficulties). Daily occurrences of traffic or parking difficulties being given as a reason are not acceptable. Leave home earlier.

If you arrive after 8.55am you will need to enter school via the front door and sign your child in at the office which will delay your child's start to the day which will have an impact. It is commonly accepted that if a child is just 5 minutes late each day then this is equivalent to 3 days of learning lost a year. Again, it is very disruptive for both the child and the rest of the class when they miss the start of the first lesson of the day.

Please try and ensure that you and your child are on the playground promptly so they can enter school without delay.

I do hope this re-clarifies the situation around absence and lateness and I hope you will support your child and the school by ensuring that they are in school, on time, every day.

I am sure you will all agree with me (and the Governing Body) that good attendance and good punctuality are essentials for a good life and, long term, excellent for basic work skills in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

L. Walsh
Head Teacher