



"The more I learn about the world in which I live, the closer I grow to God."

Attendance Policy

1. Our Approach

At St Albert the Great, regular attendance is essential for pupils to learn well, feel part of the community and be safe.

Regular attendance supports not only academic progress, but also friendships, confidence, routine, wellbeing and a sense of belonging within the school community.

We have high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils. We also recognise that, at times, pupils may face barriers to attending school. Our approach is to:

- expect high attendance;
- notice absence early;
- understand the reasons behind it;
- support pupils and families; and
- where needed, act decisively.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. We work in partnership with families to ensure every child attends regularly and is supported to succeed.

2. Expectations

School day

- Gates open: **8:45am**
- School day starts: **8:50am**
- Registers taken: **8:50–8:55am**
- Registers close: **9:15am**
- End of day: **3:20pm**

Punctuality

- Pupils arriving after **8:55am** receive a late mark (L).
- Pupils arriving after **9:15am**, without a valid reason, will receive an unauthorised absence mark (U).
- Late pupils should be brought to the school office by a parent/carer so that the sign-in process can be completed safely and accurately.

Arriving on time helps children settle positively into the school day, feel ready to learn and avoid missing important learning, routines and opportunities to connect with others.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Senior Leader for Attendance: Alex Sallis, Executive Headteacher

Daily attendance processes

- Registers are completed twice daily.
- First-day response contact is made where a pupil is absent without an explanation.
- Where contact cannot be established, further contact and appropriate welfare checks will be considered.
- The urgency and nature of the school's response will reflect the individual pupil's circumstances and any known safeguarding vulnerabilities.

Day-to-day attendance monitoring and family contact are undertaken by the school's office and attendance team, with concerns escalated to senior leaders and the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

All staff

All staff:

- promote high expectations for attendance;
- notice and raise concerns early; and
- build positive relationships with pupils and families.

Governors monitor attendance patterns and the impact of the school's attendance work.

4. Absence Procedures

Parents/carers must:

- inform the school on the first day of absence;
- provide a clear reason for absence; and
- keep the school updated where absence continues.

If no reason is received:

- the school will contact parents/carers on the first day; and
- further contact and checks will be made if no response is received.

The school will always follow up unexplained absence as part of its safeguarding duty. The nature and urgency of this response will take account of the pupil's individual circumstances and any known vulnerabilities.

5. Types of Absence

The school determines whether absence is authorised or unauthorised in accordance with statutory requirements.

Authorised absence may include:

- illness;
- medical or dental appointments that cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours; and
- exceptional circumstances agreed in accordance with statutory guidance.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- absence without explanation;
- holidays or other leave taken during term time without approval; and
- other absence which the school is unable to authorise.

Medical evidence may be requested where absence is frequent or where further information is reasonably required to understand and support a pupil's attendance.

6. Responding to Attendance Concerns

The school monitors attendance closely and responds early, consistently and proportionately.

There is no single pathway for all pupils. Responses are based on patterns of attendance, emerging concerns and individual circumstances, including health, SEND, safeguarding and family context.

For all pupils

- Attendance is monitored daily and reviewed regularly.
- Emerging concerns are followed up promptly.
- The school works with families to understand reasons for absence.

Where a pupil is at risk of persistent absence

- The school will work proactively with the pupil and family to identify and address barriers.
- Support will be offered, which may include adjustments, pastoral support or signposting to other services.
- The school may act as lead practitioner where attendance is the main concern.

Where absence becomes persistent (below 90%) or concerns increase

- A more structured attendance support plan will be put in place where appropriate.
- This will set out agreed actions, support and review points.
- The school may involve external services where needed.

Where there is limited improvement or engagement

- The school will hold more formal discussions with parents/carers.
- Expectations will be made clear, including the potential for legal intervention where attendance does not improve.

At all stages, the school aims to work in partnership with families and provide appropriate support. Formal action may be taken where support is not effective, is not engaged with or is not appropriate.

7. Supporting Pupils to Return to School

We recognise that some pupils experience periods of absence due to illness or other significant circumstances.

In these cases, our focus is on ensuring a successful return to school. This may include:

- a planned and supported return;
- pastoral check-ins;
- adaptations to routines where needed; and
- support to catch up on learning.

Our aim is to ensure that absence does not lead to longer-term disengagement from school.

8. Persistent and Severe Absence

- **Persistent absence:** attendance below 90%.
- **Severe absence:** attendance below 50%.

Persistent and severe absence may be an important indicator of wider safeguarding, welfare or educational concerns and will therefore be monitored carefully.

The school will:

- monitor these pupils closely;
- work with pupils and families to understand and address barriers;
- work with external agencies where appropriate; and
- take appropriate action to ensure pupils are safe and accessing education.

Pupils who are severely absent will receive particularly close attention and coordinated support.

9. Special Circumstances

Medical needs and SEND

We maintain high expectations for attendance while recognising that some pupils face additional challenges.

Support will be tailored to individual needs using a graduated and adaptive approach where appropriate and may include reasonable adjustments, external support or healthcare planning.

The school will work with pupils and families to support attendance while taking account of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

Alternative provision

Where a pupil accesses alternative provision, attendance is monitored closely and remains the responsibility of the school.

Reduced or part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education.

In exceptional circumstances, a temporary reduced or part-time timetable may be agreed where it is in the pupil's best interests and supports their return to full-time education.

Any such arrangement will:

- be exceptional and temporary;
- be clearly planned with parents/carers;

- take account of the pupil's safeguarding and educational needs;
- clearly identify the education and provision the pupil will receive;
- include defined review points;
- be regularly reviewed; and
- focus on a return to full-time education as soon as possible.

The school will continue to monitor the pupil's attendance, welfare and access to education closely throughout the arrangement.

10. Leave of Absence

Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers must:

- apply in advance;
- where possible, submit requests at least 10 school days before the proposed absence;
- provide full details of the circumstances; and
- provide any additional information reasonably requested by the school.

The school aims to respond to completed requests within 5 school days. Requests made at shorter notice will still be considered where circumstances could not reasonably have been anticipated.

The decision whether to authorise leave rests with the school.

Unauthorised leave may result in a penalty notice being requested in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and Hertfordshire County Council procedures.

11. Penalty Notices and Legal Action

Where support is not successful, is not engaged with or is not appropriate, the school may consider formal action in line with the Department for Education's National Framework for Penalty Notices and Hertfordshire County Council procedures.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. These sessions do not need to be consecutive and may include different types of unauthorised absence, including unauthorised leave during term time and lateness after the register has closed.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be given an opportunity to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered. A Notice to Improve may be used where appropriate as a final opportunity to engage with support and improve attendance.

In some circumstances, including unauthorised leave during term time, support or a Notice to Improve may not be appropriate and a penalty notice may be considered without these steps.

The school will consider each case individually, including whether support is appropriate and whether a penalty notice is the most appropriate means of improving attendance.

Legal intervention will be used where necessary. Our priority remains to work with families to secure regular attendance and ensure that pupils are able to access their education.

12. Monitoring and Review

Attendance is:

- monitored daily and weekly;
- reviewed by school leaders; and
- reported to governors regularly.

The school analyses attendance patterns for individuals, groups and cohorts to identify emerging concerns and target support appropriately.

The school reviews the impact of attendance support and communicates with families about progress.

The school identifies patterns of absence and acts promptly to address them.

Date: September 2026

Review: September 2027