

THE SALTERNS ACADEMY TRUST: ADMIRAL LORD NELSON SCHOOL

**Attendance Policy
2026 - 27**



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Date written:	September 2026
Date agreed and ratified by the Governing Body:	16th September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027

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Key Staff Involved

Role	Name(s)
Headteacher	C Doherty
Deputy Headteacher Student Achievement	K Holness
Designated Senior Attendance Champion	K Holness
Senior Safeguarding and Attendance Officer	E Kelleher
Attendance and behaviour Governor	Adriana Karikari

The Governing Body will ensure that all effective procedures and protocols are in place to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance and to fulfil their safeguarding duties. Governors recognise the clear link between attendance and the attainment of students.

*United Nations Convention on the rights of the child
Article 28 – Every child has a right to education*

AIMS

1.1 School attendance is subject to various laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department of Education (DfE) and Portsmouth City Council (PCC).

1.2 DfE Guidance for School Attendance identifies that schools should:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence and lateness
- Ensure every child has access to full time education
- Act early to address patterns of absence and lateness

1.3 ALNS expects parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered with a school attend regularly and on time. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996

RATIONALE

2.1 Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%, and this is borne out in statistical analysis of GCSE results at Admiral Lord Nelson School.

Percentage	Real Terms	Potential Impact
Above 97%	Less than 6 days absence per year	Excellent attendance – likely to achieve most target grades. Increased chances of college place and ultimately successful employment
95%	10 days absence	Good attendance – students likely to achieve most target grades. Employers see this as acceptable but it does raise questions.
90%	19 days absence	The equates to a month per year and has a significant impact on potential outcomes (nationally and at ALNS students drop by around one GCSE grade if their attendance is below 90%) Colleges and employers see this as an indication of unreliability.
85%	29 days absence	This equates to one half-term per year and has significant impact on potential outcomes – students are highly unlikely to reach their targets. Colleges and employers see this as a strong indication of unreliability which will affect onward destinations on leaving school.
80% and below	If this is the pattern for 5 years a full year has been missed	This will seriously damage any future prospects. It is an indicator of lack of commitment and in addition is rightly viewed through the lens of being a safeguarding concern.

2.2 Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring their child's good attendance but we believe the key to successfully resolving any attendance problems lies in engaging the child through effective case management and collaborative working between the student, parent, school and Local Authority, ensuring families and the students themselves get the support they need.

THE BENEFITS OF GOOD ATTENDANCE

3.1 The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work.

Regular attenders:

- Make better progress, both socially and academically
- Find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Find learning more satisfying – any gap in learning due to absence in any year, can lead to poor behaviour and decreased confidence and affect their enjoyment of school – this in turn affects their desire to attend school regularly.
- Are more successful at transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment and training.

Additionally:

- Poor school attendance is closely linked to crime – According to the ONS (May 2022) 52.5% of adults receiving a custodial sentence were persistently absent from school (below 90% attendance) and 2026 statistics demonstrated that 85% of children involved in serious violence (cautioned or sentenced) were or had been persistent absentees.
- Poor school attendance is closely linked to future earning potential

3.2 Therefore at ALNS we aim to promote good attendance by:

1. Recognising those students who attend regularly (or whose absence is authorised) with house points, certificates etc.

2. Offering a broad and exciting curriculum with engaging lessons, allowing for student choice and responding to student voice feedback.
3. Working closely with parents to ensure their child attends.

3.3 We asks parents/carers to:

- Support the school with your child aiming for 100% attendance and minimal lateness
- Make sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensure they get enough sleep – if they have a broken night's sleep, please consider sending them in the afternoon, they may feel better and it gives them a chance to catch up on the learning.
- Report your child's absence/lateness to the school at the earliest opportunity
- Avoid taking your child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request Leave of Absence in advance and for exceptional circumstances.

3.4 If you are unsure whether your child should be absent from school, the NHS advise you to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are they well enough to take part in school activities?
2. Are they contagious and as such a risk to others?
3. If you had the same condition, would you stay away from work? (if it wouldn't prevent you going to work, they should be going to school).

3.5 Please contact the following staff with any concerns you might have:

Katie Holness	kholness@alns.co.uk	Deputy Headteacher: Student Achievement/Designated Senior attendance Champion
Steve Fenner	sfenner@alns.co.uk	Assistant Headteacher: Inclusivity and SENCO
Jon Gray	jgray@alns.co.uk	Head of Warrior House
Tara Smith	tsmith@alns.co.uk	Head of Victory House
Grant Morris	gmorris@alns.co.uk	Head of Spinnaker House
Dan Waldren	Dwaldren@alns.co.uk	Head of Mary Rose House
Attendance Team	attendanceuser@alns.co.uk	Safeguarding and Attendance Officers
Main Reception	admin@alns.co.uk	Central admin email address

RECORDING ABSENCE

4.1 The completion of an attendance register is a legal requirement and a child's attendance record may be used as evidence in a court of law. It must, therefore, be maintained accurately.

4.2 Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Therefore, a missed day counts as two sessions of absence. Registers are legal records and must be kept for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

4.3 Absence is either classified **by the school** as authorised or unauthorised.

4.4 Authorised absences are sessions missed by a student where there is a good reason for absence like illness or other unavoidable causes which is normally communicated to the school by the parent. This may take the form of a phone call, letter or e-mail. This contact must be made by 9.15am and failure to do so will result in a text or phone call from the school to the primary guardians listed in school records. From day 3 onwards of either no contact or an insufficient reason for absence, home welfare check visits may be conducted, unannounced, by senior staff so we can ensure the student is safe.

Authorised absences include but are not limited to:

- Genuine illness (medical evidence might be requested in order to best support students)

- Urgent medical treatment
- Religious observance
- School suspension

4.5 Unauthorised absences are those absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given.

Unauthorised absences include but are not limited to:

- Parents keeping their child off from school unnecessarily, for example to look after siblings, as a birthday treat or to go shopping
- Truancy at any point during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school late arriving after 09:35;
- Students who have already been self-certified ill for 5 days in one term and we have reason to believe the student is well enough to manage in school, potentially with reasonable adjustments
- Family Holidays

4.6 All absences are treated as unauthorised unless and until the school receives a satisfactory explanation. Ultimately it is the school's decision if a child's absence/lateness is authorised or not. However, due consideration will be given to the reasons for absence/lateness provided by the parent/carer and the child's historical pattern of attendance/punctuality.

4.7 Parents may be required to provide medical evidence of illness if an absence exceeds 5 days in any given term. Where a student's health needs are complex or long term we may seek medical evidence to better understand these needs and identify the most suitable provision in line with statutory guidance. We will also ensure we consult with parents and include the student's voice when we consider the support that is best put in place. It is recognised that the best option is usually for the child to be in school, with appropriate support and in line with the Equalities act (2010).

4.8 If a student absence is recorded as "unable to attend due to sickness" (code I) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the student will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more or that the student's total number of school days missed during the school year will reach or exceed 15 days, the school will make a "Sickness return" to the local authority. This is to help the school and local authority agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend due to health needs, in line with statutory guidance. This is referred to as a section 19 duty and is a statutory duty for the local authority.

4.9 Where a student is in hospital (planned or otherwise) for a period of time, they will be supported by the hospital teaching team. Admiral Lord Nelson school staff will liaise with the hospital team, ensuring the continuity of education and that reintegration is as smooth as possible. Reintegration may take a variety of formats – swift, slower, part time or involving the support of digital devices such as the AV1 robot. Professionals and the family, including the student, will be involved in creating a reintegration plan and reviewing it as appropriate. If the hospital admission is planned, this work might begin in advance of the admission.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 To encourage high levels of attendance, the school will:

- Regularly review and update the attendance policy as necessary
- Ensure efficient and consistent practice in addressing attendance issues by having clear roles and responsibilities
- Celebrate and reward students who have good and outstanding attendance
- Keep accurate records of attendance
- Engage in local and national strategies that aim to improve attendance

- Notify and inform all parents of their child's attendance through ARBOR and termly progress updates. Parents whose child's attendance is causing concern will also receive e-mail, letters and telephone calls at specific trigger points such as but not limited to 4 days illness or 3 days unauthorised absence
- Work with appropriate agencies to minimise absence such as School Nursing, Mental Health Support Teams or Community Based Early Help.
- Review any requests for absence, taking into account any exceptional circumstances
- Ensure all staff play an active role in the promotion of attendance
- Analyse attendance data comparing local and national figures, looking at groups of students in order to identify and implement strategies for improvement and support.
- Ensure early intervention strategies are used for those "at risk" of becoming persistent absentees or severely absent children.
- Promote attendance through a planned programme of interventions e.g. allocated time in tutor time, assemblies and student mentoring
- Inform parents and students the link between high levels of attendance with academic success and employability at every opportunity
- Work with parents to achieve the highest levels of attendance
- Consider legal action against parents for a child's poor attendance when other interventions have failed to have any impact. **This is designed to protect the students right to an education.**

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS:

6.1 Parents who wish to take their child out of school for any other reason other than illness or medical appointments **must** complete a 'Leave of Absence Form' (LOAF). Request forms are available from the Parents section of the school website or from the school reception (under the "information letters and forms" tab). Once completed a paper copy must be returned to school reception. Application for leave of absence should be made at least 10 days in advance of the leave to allow the request to be processed.

- **The Headteacher cannot authorise any time off for holidays**, although in exceptional circumstances may take the decision that a fixed penalty notice is not appropriate. The Department of Education are very clear in their statutory guidance (2026) that they do "not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance".

MEDICAL OR DENTAL APPOINTMENTS:

7.1 All appointments must be made outside of school hours whenever possible.

7.2 If this is not possible or in cases of emergencies parents must inform the school of the appointment. Ideally, this will take the form of a note/letter signed and dated by the parent that can be shown to their teacher and to reception staff when they sign out of school.

7.3 Students must first sign out at Reception, showing a note from home, and an official pass will be issued. It is expected that a student will return to school later in the school day following a medical appointment.

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

8.1 Portsmouth City Council, in line with the DFE, categorise irregular attendance into two groups – "Persistent absentees" (for attendance which falls below 90%) and "Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeated occasions" (previously referred to as severely absent children - for attendance which falls below 50%). It is important to note that having attendance below 50% (and some Persistent Absenteeism depending on the circumstances) is considered a

safeguarding concern and may be referred to appropriate agencies alongside any school action taken to improve attendance.

8.2 When attendance falls below 90% we work hard with the student and parent/carer to get this back on track. This might take the form of telephone calls on the first day of any subsequent absence or a meeting with a tutor or Head of House to establish the reasons for the poor attendance and what support might need to be offered to improve things.

8.3 If there is no improvement, if other routes have failed, and more than 10 sessions (half days) recorded as unauthorised in any rolling ten week period (even if this crosses two school years), the school can request that a Fixed Penalty Notice be served. This may be deemed appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Late arrival to school after the register has closed
- Truancy
- Parentally condoned absences
- Failure of parents to engage, communicate or co-operate with the school
- Term-time holidays

8.4 Each parent of a student with irregular attendance (not holiday based) will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued and will be given a period of 30 days to improve. The Fixed Penalty Notice will not be issued if there is no further unauthorised absence from school during the warning period.

8.5 Each case will be considered separately. For example, a Fixed Penalty Notice may not be issued if it would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed, however legal measures will be considered if the family do not require support from any agency to improve attendance or where that support has been refused or unsuccessful.

8.6 As per Government statutory guidance (in place since Autumn Term 2024), the first penalty notice issued will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days (£80 if within 21 days) and a second penalty notice issued will be a flat rate of £160. Please note, a third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year period. In a case where this national threshold has been met for a third or more time in three years, alternative, usually legal, action will be taken instead. (See Appendix 3 for full details).

Please note, for Term-time holidays taken without school permission, there is no warning period and an immediate Fixed Penalty Notice can be served. This includes circumstances when we have reasonable evidence a holiday took place even if we are not notified of it.

8.6 We have a legal duty to report the absence of any students who are absent without any explanation for 20 consecutive days. If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the Local Authority is notified that the child is "at risk of missing". Childrens Services staff, from Portsmouth City Council, will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. It is therefore, very important we always have up-to-date contact numbers for all parents. Best practice is to have at least two emergency contact numbers per student which we endeavour to achieve.

LATENESS/PUNCTUALITY

9.1 It is important to be on time for the start of all lessons so as not to miss vital learning time and not to cause disruption to the learning of others once the lesson has started. It is reasonable for subject staff to expect students to catch up missed learning at home or in detention.

9.2 Students arriving late to school must sign in at reception to explain their lateness and be registered. The attendance officer will decide if the lateness is authorised or unauthorised, record the attendance mark and the number of minutes missed. The school day starts at 8.45am and the register will close at 9.15am. Therefore, a student will be marked "Late" if they arrive between 8.45am and 9.15am and they will receive an "unauthorised absence" mark if they arrive after 9.15am as this arrival is after the morning registration session has closed. Please note this is a recorded half day absence even if they subsequently arrive during the morning. Our school day ends at 3pm.

9.3 Persistent lateness to school (10 sessions) can be punishable with a Fixed Penalty Notice, however ALNS will seek to work with families to improve punctuality prior to requesting the Portsmouth City Council issue one. In particular, ALNS will have due regard to the extra responsibilities placed on students with young carer roles within their families and work to support them to fulfill this role as well as their education potential.

REFERENCES

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE July 2026)
- Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence – (DfE - February 2022)
- Arranging Education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE – December 2023)
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DFE Feb 2023)
- Support for children where mental health is affecting attendance – effective practise examples (DFE Feb 2023)
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DFE – 2015)
- School attendance: parental responsibility measures. Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police. (DfE Nov 2013, updated May 2020)
- <https://www.portsmoutheducationpartnership.co.uk/school-attendance>
- Children Missing from Education statutory guidance – (updated September 2025)
- Education Act – 1996 (Sections 444A and 444B) amended by Section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act - 2003
- Portsmouth Code of Conduct in respect of Fixed Penalty Notices (Penalty Notice Protocol) – August 2024
- The impact of School absence on lifetime earnings – GOV. UK (March 2025)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – ALNS attendance and punctuality responsibilities.

Appendix 2 – Impact of student absence on attainment

Appendix 3 – National Framework for penalty notices

MONITORING

The Policy is reviewed every year by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors.

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Relationships and Behaviour Systems Policy
- Children Looked After (CLA) Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

APPENDIX 1

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Headteacher:

- Set attendance targets and monitor progress towards achieving them
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote high levels of attendance
- Make timely decisions on leave of absence requests.

Deputy Headteacher (Student Achievement):

- Be the Designated Senior Attendance Champion
- Set attendance targets and monitor progress towards achieving them
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote high levels of attendance
- Notify parents as appropriate that failure to attend regularly by a student of compulsory age could lead to their legal prosecution
- Working with appropriate staff, initiate strategies to improve attendance
- Report termly to Governors
- Oversee the attendance arrangements and ensure they are working efficiently
- Ensure regular checks of the registers are made to monitor student absence
- Ensure regular checks of absence communication and ensure unaccounted absences are followed up
- Arrange appropriate training for staff and deal with issues of inadequate registering
- Produce and communicate summary data on attendance
- Consider and then proceed with legal interventions including the use of penalty notices
- Contact home where patterns of poor attendance are causing concern
- Deliver assemblies on attendance and plan materials for the tutor programme
- To meet regularly with Heads of House, SENCO and the safeguarding and attendance team to monitor the effects of the action taken
- Responsible to the Headteacher and Governors for overseeing and coordinating all attendance procedures and for meeting attendance targets
- Ensure Heads of House and Assistant Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes consistently challenge poor attendance through effective line management
- Offer advice and guidance to a Head of House or the Assistant Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes as necessary
- Provide evidence of impact of strategies to improve levels of attendance to the Headteacher during line management and appraisal process
- Alongside the Senior Safeguarding and Attendance Officer lead the work of the Safeguarding and Attendance team to ensure the best possible attendance for all students and that appropriate support is in place for where this is not the case.
- Ensure, by working through all staff (including tutors) that those students not accessing the school site at all receive support to re-engage with the school community and maintain a sense of belonging to Admiral Lord Nelson School. This is likely to include home visits.

Head of House:

- Liaise with Safeguarding and Attendance team on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Lead tutor team in addressing any students with attendance below 95%
- Use ARBOR to track student attendance and punctuality on an ongoing basis and take action as appropriate regarding rewards and sanctions
- To promote high levels of attendance and punctuality, e.g. by leading House assemblies which highlight the importance of good attendance
- When liaising with parents, provide a high level of challenge to parents of students whose patterns of poor attendance are causing concern
- Notify parents as appropriate that a student of compulsory age who fails to attend school regularly could lead to the parent/carer's legal prosecution
- Review Individual Attendance Plans, alongside Safeguarding and Attendance Team, regularly referring cases to the Local Authority Attendance team or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (as appropriate) if plans are failing

- Ensure lead staff consistently arrange and manage detentions for students who arrive late to school
- Provide evidence of impact of strategies to improve levels of attendance during line management and appraisal process

Safeguarding and Attendance team:

- Monitor registers to ensure they are all completed accurately within the legal time frame
- Make first day contact absence calls home to parents
- Produce daily late and Attendance Monitoring Group absence lists and email out to key staff
- Gather medical evidence for students' absences from school
- Provide regular data on Attendance Monitoring Group and add/remove students as appropriate
- Inform Heads of House/Tutors of any concerns with regards student absences
- Lead and complete Individual Attendance Plans for students whose attendance falls below 85% (alongside the Senior Inclusion Officers)
- Alongside the DSL and Heads of House, work with the families of those who have very low attendance to secure better attendance, offering appropriate levels of support and challenge
- When liaising with parents, provide a high level of challenge to parents of students whose patterns of poor attendance are causing concern
- Review Individual Attendance Plans regularly, referring cases to the Head of House if plans are failing
- Notify parents as appropriate that a student of compulsory age who fails to attend school regularly could lead to the parent/carer's legal prosecution
- Submit Fixed Penalty notice or School Attendance Panel requests as per PCC protocol - follow up as appropriate.
- Refer to and liaise with external agencies to support attendance such as school nursing and Mental Health Support teams.
- Act as Lead Professional in those multi-agency meetings where attendance is the significant factor.
- Produce weekly attendance reports on specific cohorts – following guidance from Deputy Headteacher: Student Achievement.
- Regularly run reports on students with absence and send relevant letters home (3 day, 5 day, FPN warning etc)
- Process 'Leave of Absence Forms'

Tutors:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Sanction students who arrive late to school or lessons
- Support assemblies and deliver attendance aspects of the tutor programme
- Keep Head of House and safeguarding and Attendance Team advised of suspected truancy advising them of any underlying problems that may account for absence
- Promote good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities (such as during tutor time, assemblies, working towards reward trips), creating a culture of high challenge and high support.
- Make contact with parents when attendance patterns begin to become irregular, offer support and liaise with Head of House, recording contact and concerns on CPOMS

Subject staff:

- Staff must meet and greet students on arrival to their lesson, sanctioning those who are late
- Complete an accurate register of attendance of students on ARBOR
- Take action if internal truancy is suspected e.g. emergency call out to notify staff of missing student
- Inform Head of House of any patterns of absence that need challenging
- Promote good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Set work for students to catch up on what they have missed - Microsoft Teams is used as the mechanism for this, all work being placed on there for each lesson as part of the planning process.

- Welcome back students after a period of absence ensuring they feel connected with the class and secure in being able to “catch up” with the class to avoid further absence due to anxiety over feeling “left behind”.

APPENDIX 2

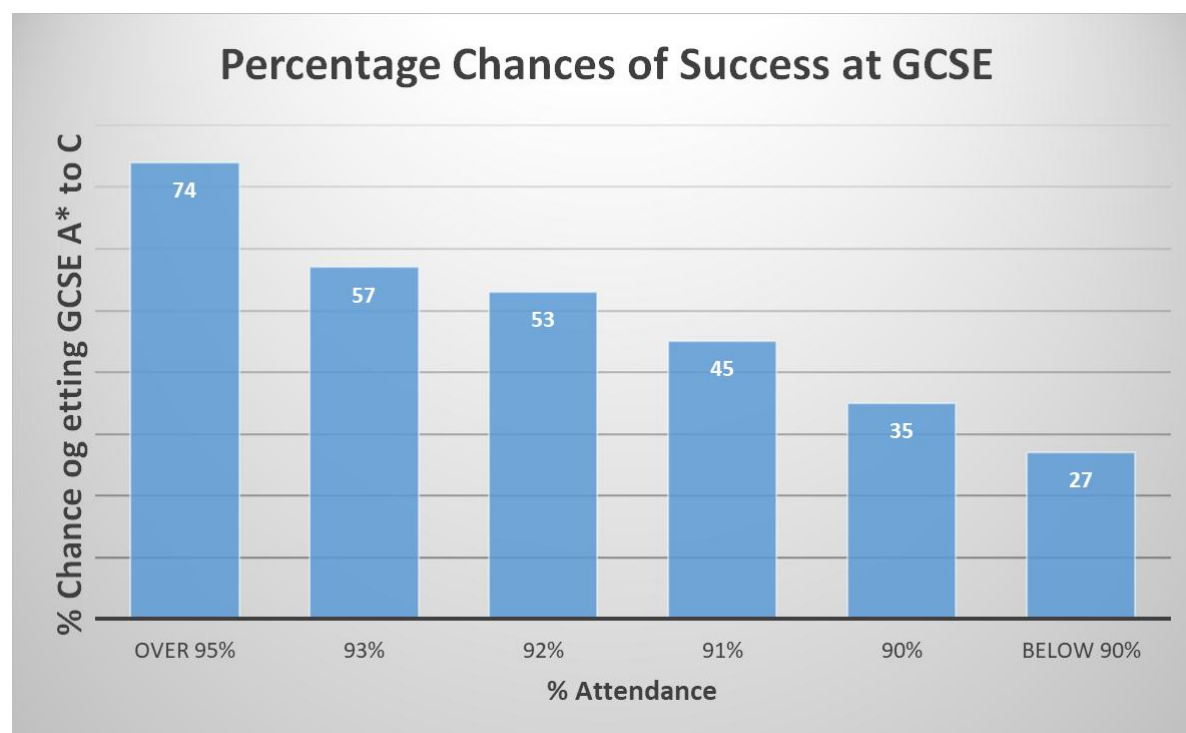
Attendance Matters

The Department for Education analysis of students' attendance compared with their achievement shows a clear correlation between attendance and the grades that a student is most likely to achieve.



Attendance	Days at school per year	Chance of achieving 5 or more A* to C grades including English and Mathematics
100%	190	82%
96%	182	74%
93%	177	57%
90%	171	41%
85%	162	29%

If a student is absent for 17 days a year they would have 91% attendance and the impact of this would be that they drop one GCSE grade compared to what they should achieve in each subject.



Appendix 3: National Framework for Penalty Notices



From 19 August 2024, the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices will apply

Per Parent, Per Child

E.g. 2 parents taking 3 children out of school for a leave of absence in term time would incur 3 penalty notices for each parent

S.576 Education Act 1996 defines a parent as all natural parents, not a natural parent but has parental responsibility, or has care of a child.

National Threshold

There will be a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week school period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absences.

The 10-week school period can span different terms or school years.

1

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a leave of absence in term time or irregular school attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at: £160 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days.

This is reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within the first 21 days.

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

2

Second Offence

(within 3 years of the first offence)

Where it has been deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charge at:

£160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days (there is no reduction for this)

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

3

Third Offence and any Further Offences

(within 3 years of the first offence)

The third time that any offence is committed and a sanction is requested for either a leave of absence or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.