



THE  
**THOMAS  
AVELING**  
SCHOOL

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**REVIEWED: SEPTEMBER 2023**  
**REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2024**

## Statement of intent

Thomas Aveling is fully committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students. We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open as such attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Research shows that all students who attend school every day and arrive punctually achieve much better results than those who experience attendance problems. The Government recommends that students' attendance does not drop below 96% or 7days' absence, except in serious medical cases. The effect that poor attendance at school can have on a child's education can be permanent and damaging. Students need to be in school to access key learning and information and to close gaps in knowledge, understanding and application.

Yearly absence equates to lessons missed (based on five lessons a day timetable)

<b>% Attendance</b>	<b>Days of absence</b>	<b>Lessons missed</b>
96%	7	35
93.68%	12	60
92.63%	14	70
91.05%	17	85
90%	19	95
88.42%	22	110
85.79%	27	135
82.11%	34	170
80%	38	190
73.68%	50	250

Thomas Aveling is committed to raising attendance and to supporting parents and students with high attendance expectations. We actively promote good attendance for all our students using a variety of rewards, particularly through our "Achievement Points" system. We have a whole school approach which involves the teamwork of students, parents/carers, staff, the Head Teacher and the School Governors and, where required, the Attendance Service.

## Parental responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school every day and arrives on time. Daily attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child who should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines a child's education and sometimes puts the child at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe. Parents are asked to leave or send a message as early as possible via the school gateway or by telephone. Students are expected to arrive no later than 8.35 a.m. in order to register in their form room at 8.40 a.m. All students that arrive late must report and sign in with their house team and ADOL where the reason for lateness is recorded.



## Change of circumstance

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that all changes to a student's circumstances are given immediately to the school. It is often necessary to contact parents/carers during the day and therefore vital that the school is informed of current telephone numbers, email and home addresses as well as emergency contact details.

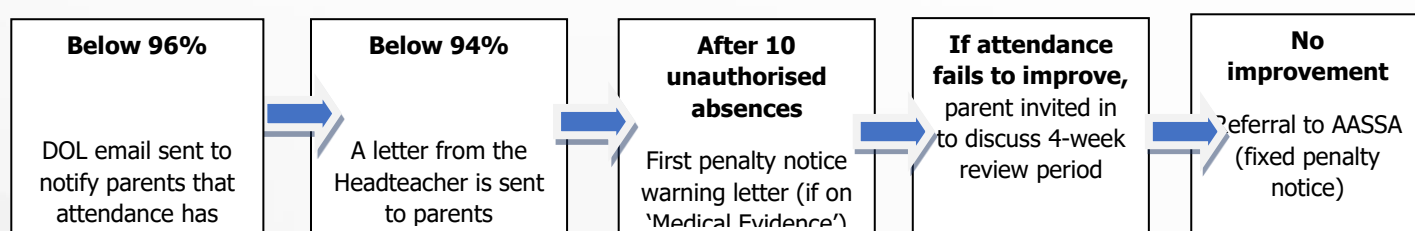
## The role of school staff

There is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance; the Assistant Head Teacher Inclusions and Children's Team Manager has overall responsibility for attendance. Form tutors complete the first register of the day and then class teachers complete a register in each subsequent lesson. Marking the attendance register twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark students present, absent or late – any causes for concern (for example, if a student is marked present earlier in the day but has not come to a later lesson) should be reported immediately to the Student Services Welfare Officer and the appropriate aDOL.

It is the responsibility of the Student Services Welfare Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence.
- Where there has been no communication, written communication is made with parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes).
- Parents are informed at each school reporting stage of their child's attendance figure.

## Timeline of school action for poor attendance



## Children missing in education

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by the completion of a Child Missing Education (CME) referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have been unable to locate.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.



- If a family go abroad and does not return within 20 days (without Head Teacher approval) a CME will be submitted after 10 days and the student could be taken off roll after 20 day

### **Punctuality**

- Form tutor notes lateness on the register and discusses strategies to improve punctuality and sets targets.
- Students who arrive in school after 9.am report to their House aDOL.
- If a student is late three times across a term, they receive a DOL breaktime detention. If they reach 4 lates it is escalated to a one-hour after school leadership detention. If lateness persists that term, they receive an additional 1-hour detention for every subsequent lateness.
- Ongoing lateness may result in a request for the student and their parents or carer to attend an Attendance Clinic.

### **Late registration**

- Morning register closes in the form period at 9.00am (or at the end of assembly). If a student arrives late to school after the register has closed, they must go straight to their Assistant Director of Learning to register. The AM Register remains 'open' until 9.30am.
- Any student present in lessons but with no evidence of them having registered must be sent to the aDOL to sign in. Students failing to register will lead to parents/carers being notified and a sanction imposed by the DOL.
- Student 'registering' with their ADOL after 9.30am will be classed as absent and a note needed as routine if no call from parent to explain the lateness.
- First day calls are made to Year 7 students and all vulnerable attenders at need. Text messages are sent to all parents who have not notified the absence.

### **Absence**

Good attendance at school is vital. It is recognised that some young people suffer from longer term medical issues and such absence would normally be authorised by the school as there will be clear medical evidence to support the absence. The school would also work with the Inclusion and Attendance Service and others, as appropriate, to assist such young people in continuing their education. Parents are requested to complete medical information forms and to send these into the main school reception. Where medical issues arise during the school year, parents are required to notify the main school office of such conditions, as well as providing any relevant doctors certificates/letters. The school maintains a confidential medical register which is shared with staff working within the school.



### First/Second day of absence

- Parents are actively encouraged to report their child's absence through the EduLink app. The appropriate absence code will be entered onto SIMS by student services.
- Planned absence can also be reported through the EduLink app in advance – supporting evidence (e.g., medical letters) can be attached to the form and this will be held on file.
- Any pupil premium students not in school are followed up by phone calls and home visits by the HSSW or Intervention Officer.

### Protracted Absence

- If student's absence may be for a week or more and medical evidence is provided, work can be sent home (co-ordinated by the Form Tutor/ADOL/Children's Team) if requested by the parent.
- Reintegration should be a positive part of lesson planning as highlighted by Ofsted and The Key Stage 3 Strategy. The ethos and culture of the classroom has to be such that children want to learn and returning to school is a positive step rather than a disheartening experience.
- Parents are alerted if student attendance drops below 96% (see timeline of school action).
- Persistent absence requires medical evidence.
- HSSW intervention including home visits.

### Governor Panel

- For chronic absence that fails to improve after DOL intervention & notice of fixed penalty letter – parent will be required to attend an Attendance Review comprising TLA, House aDOL and the linked attendance Governors.

### **Penalty notices and local authority action**

It may be decided that the serving of a Penalty Notice is appropriate for cases where a parent continually fails to provide an explanation for their child's absence in accordance with the school procedures. **If absence continues to be a cause for concern after the 4-week Attendance review, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence or where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours
- Absences of 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any six-week school period – these do not need to be consecutive.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)





## Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional Circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining "exceptional" are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by "unavoidable" it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Head Teacher can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and that this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## Leave of absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular (every day) attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school. The Head Teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body



## Truancy

### Suspected Truancy From Lessons

If students who are missing from a lesson but have been marked present previously in the school day, the SSM/ADOL and/or Reception should be informed. The student's whereabouts will then be monitored and parents/carers and DOL informed.

On return to school the truant is:

1. Seen by the DOL/Subject Leader and referred to the Form Tutor and the ADOL/DOL/Subject Leader will contact home as appropriate.
2. The student will be placed on Attendance Report.
3. The student may be placed in the Inclusion zone to monitor.
4. The Form Tutor/ADOL will then monitor closely attendance in the subsequent weeks and talk to the student if there is a problem and refer to the Children's Team Leader as appropriate.

### Students Off Site

No Key Stage 3 or 4 students are allowed off site at break or lunch. If they are caught doing so parents/carers are contacted by the ADOL by letters that explain the sanctions as appropriate and which can include: Break and Lunchtime Report, Community Service, inclusion in Inclusion Zone or with Tutor and in persistent cases Parental Supervision at lunchtimes off site or a fixed term exclusion.

### Attendance awards

- Merits and 100% attendance certificates awarded for excellent attendance in end of term House assemblies.
- Attendance Lottery – Every Friday a Form and register position is chosen at random. If the student selected has no unauthorized absence for the current term, they win a £5 Amazon Voucher. If the student selected has an unauthorized absence, the prize rolls over to the next week for the next lottery draw.
- Any pupil premium students enrolled on a 4-week attendance intervention with the Intervention Officer can earn a 'Queue Jump' pass for the canteen at the end of each week completed at 100% attendance.
- Students with 100% attendance at the end of the academic year will be invited to a VIP pizza party where they will receive a certificate of recognition.

