

AL-ZAHRA SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2022/2023

School:	Al-Zahra School
Head Teacher:	Mrs Z Rizvi
Named Personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection (Child Protection Committee)	
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs S Rizvi
Deputy Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs Z Rizvi , Ms Z Aldabagh (KS3 and KS4), Mrs E Jaffri (KS1 and KS2)
Attendance Officer	Mrs S Mirza
Policy Review Dates	
Academic year:	2022/23
Review Cycle:	Annual
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Al-Khoei Foundation Ratification:	29 September 2022
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1. INTRODUCTION

At Al-Zahra school we encourage all pupils to aim for excellence. For our children to succeed, it is vital that they attend school **regularly, on time** and **everyday** if they are fit and healthy. We pay a high regard to punctuality and attendance and arriving to school on time and to all the lessons which is an integral part of our Behaviour Policy.

i. Why Regular Attendance is Important

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- progress, leaving them vulnerable to falling behind;
- attainment and achievement in both primary and secondary school;
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships;
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others.

ii. Policy Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to increase parents/carers level of awareness of the need for good attendance and punctuality. Through this policy we aim to;

- Improve pupils' achievement by aiming for a minimum of **95%** for all pupils apart from those with chronic health issues;
- Work in partnership with parents, carers.

2. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

At our school, attendance of pupils is recorded electronically on the school portal which helps the school to monitor attendance and punctuality. Persistent absentees and latecomers are followed up by the Attendance Officer.

School also have safeguarding duties (under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2010) in respect of their pupils, and as part of this, the school is under an obligation to investigate all unexplained absences.

i. Registration Timings

Under the 2006 Education Regulations the school is legally required to register students twice daily. Morning and afternoon registrations are taken on arrival in the morning between **8.50 a.m. to 9.00 a.m.** and in the afternoon between **12.55 p.m. to 1.05 p.m.** for **Primary** and between **2.00 p.m. to 2.10 p.m.** for

Secondary. The registers still remain the responsibility of the Attendance Officer. Therefore, all unauthorised absence will be monitored by the Attendance officer. It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions. Not only does this process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill.

ii. **Punctuality**

Students who arrive after **8.50 a.m.** will be marked late. Late students should collect a late slip from the Al-Zahra School Office. The purpose of late slip is to provide evidence to the class teacher that the student has been acknowledged present in school and the time they entered the building. After **9.20 a.m.** students are marked 'U'. According to the Regulations this shows that your child is on site but will count as an unauthorised absence. (Please see code descriptions).

iii. **Understanding Types of Absence**

The school determines whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. This is the reason why parents/carers are asked to provide a clear reason for absence preferably by email latest by **9.00 a.m.**

Authorised Absences are morning or afternoon absences from school due to illness or medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school hours.

Unauthorised Absences are those which the school does not consider as reasonable for which no 'leave' has been given. Some examples are;

- Absences not properly explained;
- Student looking after younger siblings;
- Students arriving after 9.20 a.m. without a valid reason;
- A student attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons;
- A student not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member.

iv. **Leave of Absence**

Term time leave is not permitted unless there is an exceptional reason. In this case parents are required to fill an **exceptional leave form** which can be requested by email. The Headteacher will review the request and parents will be contacted by the

Attendance Officer with the outcome. **If travelling, please do not make any booking prior to the decision given by the school.** Please adhere to the decision taken by the school as refused permission will remain unauthorised.

Where the decision is taken to refuse permission and the leave is still taken, the absence will remain unauthorised and the school reserves the right to report the matter to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and impose a fine of **£40 per day of absence for each child.**

Examples of unauthorised leave;

- Cheaper fares
- Dates error in booking holiday
- Difficulty finding flights
- Family holiday
- Extending holiday running into term time

v. **Parents/Carers Responsibility**

On the first day of absence parents/ carers are expected to contact Al-Zahra school by sending an e-mail to alzahra@asazs.co.uk before the start of the school, latest by **9.00 a.m.** that day, explaining the reason for the absence. If you are unable to send an email in the morning for any reason, please ring the office on **020 7372 7706.**

For absences regarding illness, the school requires parents to give the exact symptoms. Emails stating, 'not feeling well' or 'unable to come in' are not sufficient explanations.

vi. **School Calendar**

Each year a school calendar is sent out by email. Moreover, if for any reason the school is closed, Al-Zahra School will formally send out an email to inform Parents/ Carers. A **text** message will be sent if the closure is short notice. Please phone the school office if you are unsure about the school dates or a closure.

vii. **Absence Guidelines**

The Headteacher and Attendance Officer will monitor attendance patterns across the year groups and Parents/Carers will be contacted for those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.

Referrals will be made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in the following instances:

- Any absence of 3 days or **more without communication from home**;
- where attendance falls below **85%**.

All referrals to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and any other causes for concern which are not improving will be discussed with the Head teacher before making the referral.

viii. **Safeguarding and Children Missing Education (CME)**

At Al-Zahra School our Child Protection Team work conscientiously to create a positive, caring and honest partnership with Parents/Carers.

The school policies and practices for safeguarding children are monitored by analysing the relationship between persistent unauthorised absences and Children Missing in Education (CME). Persistent absence and lateness are closely monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a potential indicator of safeguarding concerns in the home or outside of the school. These may include but are not limited to domestic violence, neglect, abuse, forced marriage, radicalisation, bullying, FGM, involvement with drug or gangs, mental health issues, suicide risk, malnutrition, etc.

At Al-Zahra School we have a duty of care to our pupils and matters related to safeguarding are addressed with the upmost importance. It may be necessary in some cases to make referrals to appropriate agencies in order to provide relevant support and guidance to pupils, their families and the school.

On most occasions, parents will be invited to school to discuss any safeguarding concerns, however, the Child Protection Team also reserve the right to refer any concerns to external agencies such as, Brent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Social Care or Police without consultation with Parents/Carers as the child's welfare and safety takes president.

We endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and Parents/Carers.

ix. **Reluctance to go to School**

Sometimes students seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell parents/carers that they feel unwell or give another reason to be absent from school. parents/carers may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects or feel that they have no friends and are being bullied. If this is the case, please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to any member of the Safeguarding Team, Class teacher (primary) or Head of Year (secondary) / Pastoral Coordinator (secondary).

3. REGISTER CODES

For parents to understand the codes for the register, we have listed the codes provided by the Department for Education (DFE) with a short definition.

According to the DfE guidance May 2022, the following codes are to be used for

authorised absences on the register:

- Code **I**: Illness
- Code **M**: Medical or dental appointments
- Code **C**: Leave of absence granted by the School
- Code **D**: Dual Registered
- Code **J**: Interview
- Code **P**: Approved sporting activity
- Code **R**: Religious Observation
- Code **V**: Educational visit or trip
- Code **W**: Work Experience (Years 10 and 11 only.)
- Code **X**: Non-compulsory school age absence
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According to the DfE guidance May 2022 the following codes are to be used for **unauthorised** absences on the register:

- Code **G**: Family holiday not authorised by the school
- Code **N**: Reason for absence not yet provided
- Code **O**: Absent from school without authorisation
- Code **U**: Arrived in school after registration closed.

4. REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Al-Zahra School follows the 95% attendance rule. A student will fall below 95% if they miss as little as half a day over a two-week period and consequently, they would have lost out on approximately forty-five hours of teaching.

The Attendance Officer will closely monitor every pupil's attendance and we will alert parents/carers if we feel there is an issue. Percentage attendance and punctuality are also indicated in the end of term reports. Al-Zahra School undertakes a wide range of measures to support students where attendance at school is an issue and would like parents/carers to take responsibility for their child's attendance and encourage their child to being on time for school.

The following table shows the percentage of attendance with actions taken by the school should a child's attendance drop below 95%.

Rate of Attendance	Descriptor	Action	Responsibility
100%	Excellent	Certificate per term	Attendance Officer/ Headteacher
98%	Good	Recognition in Class	Attendance Officer
95%	Satisfactory	N/A	N/A
Below 95%	Cause for Concern	Meeting and a Letter of Concern	Attendance Officer/ Headteacher
85% and below	Serious Cause for Concern	Referral to EWS	Attendance Officer/ Headteacher

i. Rewards

- The Headteacher and Attendance Officer will celebrate attendance achievements by issuing certificates and sending congratulatory postcards home.
- Punctuality will also be acknowledged and rewarded by issuing certificates. Year groups will be awarded "Class punctuality of the term" and at the end of the term the class will be awarded with a special treat.

ii. Sanctions for Primary

Punctuality for primary is monitored every two weeks.

Number of Lateness	Action Primary Year Reception - 6
1 st	Class teacher speak to pupil
2 nd	Message via ClassDojo
3 rd	1 st Verbal Warning by phone
4 th	Email to parents
5 th	Request meeting with parents
6 th	Email to parents from Headteacher
More than 6 th	£20 penalty and further intervention

iii. Sanctions for Secondary

Punctuality for secondary is monitored every week. If punctuality is below 80% per half-term, a panel meeting with SLT and the Attendance Officer will be arranged for the student. The following table shows the actions taken for lateness for different year groups. For further details of attendance measures, please refer to DfE “Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance”.

Number of Lateness	Action Secondary Year 7-11	Responsibility
1 st	Text message sent to parent	Attendance Officer
2 nd	Text message sent to parent	Attendance Officer
3 rd	After-school 30 minute detention	Attendance Officer
4 th	After-school 30 minute detention	Attendance Officer
5 th	After-school 45 minute detention and meeting with parents	Attendance Officer/SLT

iv. Telephone Numbers

Finally, we would like to emphasise that there are many occasions when we need to contact parents about their child including absence. Therefore, please help us to help you and your child by ensuring that you have provided us with **up-to-date numbers** indicating clearly which one should be our first point of contact and at least one emergency number we can ring. We aim to do regular checks on telephone numbers once a year.