

AL-ZAHRA SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2024/2025

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| 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 , Mr Bayati (KS3 and KS4), Mrs E Jaffri (KS1 and KS2) |
| Attendance Officer | Mrs S Mirza |
| Policy Review Dates | |
| Academic year: | 2024/25 |
| Review Cycle: | Annual |
| Last Review Date: | 7 September 2024 |
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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 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 the 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. Parents and carers will be asked to provide a medical card/letter for appointments or hospital visits.

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**

Parents and carers are asked not to request absence in term time for their child as this is very unlikely to be authorised except in exceptional circumstances or if this is due

to illness. In this case parents are required to fill an **exceptional leave form** which can be requested by email. The Head teacher will review the request and parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer with the outcome.

Should you take your child out of school during term time this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it can be proved that this is a genuine emergency situation. Should your emergency take you out of the UK we will ask you to provide the original travel details showing the date on which the booking was made.

For prolonged absences of concern, the school may also conduct a home visit.

Where the decision is taken to refuse permission and the leave is still taken, the absence will remain unauthorised. The school reserves the right to report the matter to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and impose a fine of **£60 per day of absence for each child if paid within 28 days of the notice. The penalty will increase to £100 per day if not paid within 28 days of the notice.**

Examples of unauthorised leave;

- Cheaper fares
- Difficulty finding flights
- Family holiday
- Extending holiday running into term time
- Evidence not provided

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 Headteacher 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 August 2024, the following codes are to be used for absences on the register:

| Present Codes | |
|----------------------------|--|
| /\ | present during registration |
| B | educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes |
| K | attending provision arranged by the local authority |
| L | arrived after the register has started but before it has closed |
| P | Sporting activity with prior agreement from school |
| V | educational visit or trip |
| W | work experience |
| Absent Codes | |
| Authorised Absences | |
| C | Exceptional circumstances |
| C1 | in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad |
| C2 | absent due to part-time timetable |
| D | dual registered |
| E | suspended or permanently excluded |
| I | illness (not medical or dental appointments) |
| J1 | job/school/college interview |
| M | medical or dental appointment |
| Q | unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements |
| R | religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed) |
| S | study leave |
| T | parent travelling for occupational purposes |
| X | non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school |
| Y1 | unable to attend due to transport provided not being available |

| | |
|----|--|
| Y2 | unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption |
| Y3 | unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed |
| Y4 | unable to attend due to whole school closure |
| Y5 | unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention |
| Y6 | unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent) |

Unauthorised Absence

| | |
|---|---|
| G | holiday (not agreed) |
| N | reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days) |
| O | absent in other or unknown circumstances |
| U | late after register has closed |
| Z | pupil not yet on register |
| # | planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days) |

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. Should the lateness continue to persist, the Attendance Officer will make a referral to the Safeguarding Officer, who may report the persistent lateness to social services. Please note, the school also reserves the right to charge **£20** for persistent lateness if no improvement is seen.

| Number of Lateness | Action Primary Year Reception - 6 |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 st | Class teacher speak to pupil |
| 2 nd | Email parent with warning |
| 3 rd | Meeting arranged with parent |

iii. Sanctions for Secondary

Punctuality for secondary will be monitored every two weeks. The following table shows the actions taken for lateness. Should the lateness continue to persist, the Attendance Officer will make a referral to the Safeguarding Officer, who may report the persistent lateness to social services. 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 | After-school 30 minute detention | Attendance Officer |
| 3 rd | After-school 30 minute detention and for every lateness following this. | 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.

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