

AL-ZAHRA SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2025/2026

School:	Al-Zahra School
Head Teacher:	Mr S A Khoei

Named Personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection (Child Protection Committee)	
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs Z Aldabagh
Deputy Safeguarding Lead:	Mr S A Khoei , Mrs S.Rizvi (KS3 and KS4), Mrs E.Jaffri (KS1 and KS2)
Attendance Officer	Mrs S Mirza
Attendance Champions	Mr S A Khoei (Secondary) , Mrs E.Jaffri (Primary)

Policy Review Dates	
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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 **every day** 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.

This policy meets the following requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) which are now statutory and recognises that attendance is a safeguarding matter. Persistent absence and lateness will be treated as safeguarding concerns and escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

1. Working together to improve school attendance
2. Keep Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
3. Children Missing Education

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following school policies;

- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Data Protection 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;

- Support pupils with SEND, medical needs and mental health needs through supportive strategies such as health care plans and Individual Education Plans;
- Work in partnership with parents, carers to find supportive routes to improve attendance and develop a whole school culture;
- To offer an 'Attendance Contract' to parents as a formal route to address irregular attendance at school.

Additionally, we have designated an Attendance Champion from the Senior Leadership Team to consistently review and assess the effectiveness of our attendance monitoring strategies and procedures. The headteacher will oversee this role for the Secondary phase, and the primary deputy headteacher will take on the responsibility for the Primary phase.

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.

Schools 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 Headteacher 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.

When deemed necessary 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.

According to the new requirements for schools on data sharing introduced through the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, returns will be made to the local authority in the following instances;

- All schools must make a return to the local authority (an 'attendance return') with the full name and address of any pupil of compulsory school age who is not a boarder and has failed to attend regularly (excluding codes D, K, V or B) or has missed ten consecutive school days or more with their absence being recorded in the attendance register in ways statistically recorded as unauthorised absence.
- All schools must also make a return to the local authority (a 'sickness return') where a pupil of compulsory school age has been recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (illness) and the school have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will be, or will have been unable to attend school because of illness for at least 15 school days during the school year, whether consecutive or not.

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

At our school, we know that good attendance is vital for children to learn, succeed and feel safe. We also understand that when children are often late or absent, it can sometimes be a sign that something is wrong at home or elsewhere. For this reason, attendance is an important part of our safeguarding work. As outlined in KCSIE 2025, absence from education is a known safeguarding indicator. Staff must treat attendance concerns as safeguarding issues and follow school safeguarding reporting routes.

If a child is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education at home, they are considered to be children missing education (CME). By law (Section 436A, Education Act 1996; Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended 2016 & 2024), schools and local authorities must work together to track children missing education and ensure they are safe and receiving suitable education. Therefore, if a student withdraws from the school before the end of compulsory education, the school will;

- Request information about the student's new school or educational placement.
- Notify the Local Authority immediately if the student's new placement is unknown or if the student has not yet secured a new school. If no destination school is confirmed, notification must be immediate to comply with CME duties.

This ensures that the LA can follow up to prevent a student from becoming "missing" from education.

When students complete their GCSEs, the school will send an email to the student and/or their parents/guardians to confirm their next step in education, training, or employment. The school will record the response, including the name of the college, training provider, or employment placement. The school will also provide post-16 destination data to the Local Authority in line with statutory participation duties, to reduce the risk of pupils becoming NEET."

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 utmost 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 precedence.

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

ix. **Reluctance to go to School**

Some children, particularly those with long term or short term health needs and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), may experience reluctance to go to school due to challenges such as health issues, anxiety, or difficulties with learning and social interaction. Our school works together with families to address this by creating tailored health support plans that are designed to provide consistent, coordinated support for individuals with ongoing medical conditions or complex

needs. Attendance contracts can also be used as part of this process, providing clear expectations and agreed steps for improving attendance, while recognising the child's individual needs. When combined, SEND support and attendance contracts help build structure, consistency, and understanding, encouraging the child to re-engage with education in a supportive way.

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 Form Tutor (secondary) / Deputy headteacher. Attendance for pupils with a social worker, those in kinship care, and looked-after children will be closely monitored, with liaison with the Local Authority's **Virtual School Head (VSH)** where appropriate. In Brent, this role is currently held by **Sharon Buckby, Head of Inclusion and the Virtual School**. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Officer will liaise with the VSH to ensure appropriate monitoring, support, and intervention for these pupils." educationforlac@brent.gov.uk."

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 (e.g. 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. As an independent school, Al-Zahra reserves the right to impose a £20 administrative charge for persistent lateness where no improvement is seen. This measure is applied transparently, fairly, and only after parents have been formally notified in writing.

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. Sanctions, including detentions, will be applied fairly and consistently as part of our independent school behaviour framework. 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
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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.

All attendance data is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and may be shared with the Local Authority or safeguarding partners where required by law.

Al-Zahra School does not currently place pupils in Alternative Provision. Should this ever occur, the school will retain responsibility for the pupil's safeguarding and attendance in line with KCSIE 2025.

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