

Student Attendance Policy

Reviewed by:	Richard Fihosy and Claire Ames
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Policy Aim

AS2Educate recognises that regular attendance and a sense of belonging are essential in supporting student well-being, learning, and attainment. We understand that attendance can sometimes be affected by a child or young person's personal experiences, emotional well-being, or external circumstances. Our approach is grounded in empathy, support, and partnership, aiming to create a safe and positive environment where all students feel able to attend, engage, and thrive.

This policy is written with this ethos in mind and underpins our commitment to:

- **Promote children's welfare and safeguarding**, recognising the impact that adverse experiences may have on attendance and learning.
- **Ensure every student has access to the education they are entitled to**, with flexibility and understanding of individual needs.
- **Support every student to succeed**, offering early help and tailored interventions where barriers to attendance arise.
- **Provide access to a wide range of opportunities**, both within AS2 and beyond, so that students feel valued, included, and prepared for their next steps.

We believe that relationships and trust are central to improving attendance. We work alongside students and families to understand the underlying reasons for absence and provide support before considering formal interventions. While regular attendance is important for academic progress and well-being, we acknowledge that some absences may be unavoidable. Authorisation of absences will always be considered in context by the Provision Manager, with sensitivity to each student's circumstances.

This policy seeks to ensure that all staff, parents, carers, and agencies involved in attendance are informed and supported to play their part in enabling children to feel safe, respected, and ready to attend. It outlines the responsibilities of everyone involved and the procedures we follow to monitor attendance while keeping the child's well-being at the centre of decision-making.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain attendance by:

- **Creating a positive and welcoming atmosphere** where students feel safe, understood, and valued.
- **Promoting awareness of the benefits of regular attendance**, while avoiding blame or stigma.
- **Monitoring attendance effectively and consistently**, using this information to identify needs early and offer supportive solutions.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At AS2Educate, we recognise that building a positive pattern of attendance is a shared responsibility between students, parents/carers, and all members of staff. We understand that barriers to attendance can sometimes arise due to personal, emotional, or environmental factors, and we are committed to working collaboratively and compassionately with families to overcome these challenges.

To encourage regular attendance, we will:

- **Communicate openly** regular contact with parents/carers every 8 weeks through reports and a meeting, including professionals also supporting the student's, to discuss progress and attendance, offering praise for progress and support where difficulties are identified.
- **Work proactively** with parents/carers when attendance begins to fall below 90%, seeking to understand the underlying causes and providing early help or adjustments to re-engage the student.
- **Celebrate positive attendance and engagement** in ways that recognise each child's individual progress and efforts:
 1. **Golden Tickets** awarded for daily attendance, effort, and positive engagement beyond expectations.
 2. **Half-termly goals and collective celebrations**, focusing on shared success and encouragement, not competition or pressure.
- **Acknowledge and reward improvement**, understanding that progress towards consistent attendance may be gradual and influenced by individual circumstances.

Understanding Types of Absence

We recognise that sometimes children may be unable to attend due to a variety of reasons, and it is important for us to understand the cause of any absence so we can offer the right support.

Authorised absences are sessions missed for genuine and unavoidable reasons, such as illness (we may ask for medical evidence when appropriate), medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, emergencies, or other exceptional circumstances agreed with the Provision Manager.

Unauthorised absences are those for which no permission has been granted and which AS2 does not consider reasonable. These absences can have serious consequences, including possible involvement of the Local Authority, who may issue penalty notices or take legal action. This could involve fines or, in rare cases, court proceedings.

Examples of unauthorised absences include, but are not limited to:

- Keeping a child off unnecessarily, for example due to a late night or a minor illness that does not impact their ability to learn.
- Absences without a clear explanation.
- Arriving after the official registration period ('U' mark) which means the child is recorded as absent for that session, although present for safeguarding.
- Non-urgent activities such as shopping trips, caring for siblings, or accompanying family members to appointments.
- Celebrating birthdays during school time.
- Holidays during term time without prior authorisation or not meeting the criteria for exceptional circumstances.
- Day trips or other leave not approved by the Provision Manager.

School Attendance and the Law

Current legislation does not allow students to take time off for holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances. The Supreme Court has clarified that regular attendance means attending as prescribed by the school's rules.

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, amended in 2013, removed all allowances for family holidays or extended leave during term time unless deemed exceptional.

At AS2, leave during term time will only be granted when the Provision Manager considers the circumstances to be exceptional. Such applications must be made in writing. If leave is taken without approval or after a refusal, a penalty notice may be requested by the Local Authority.

We interpret 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Events or situations of **unique and significant emotional, educational, or spiritual importance** to the child that outweigh the loss of teaching time.
- Events that are **rare, significant, unavoidable, and short** in duration.
- By 'unavoidable', we mean something that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

We do not grant leave for:

- Any time in September, as this is vital for settling into the new class.
- During important assessments or test periods.
- When a student already has unauthorised absences or authorised leave within the same academic year.

Supporting Attendance

We recognise that sometimes children may be reluctant to attend school due to emotional, social, or other challenges. When attendance difficulties arise, AS2 Pastoral Staff work closely with

parents/carers and students to understand the underlying reasons and provide support tailored to their needs. We are committed to working in partnership with families and, when appropriate, involving external agencies to help overcome barriers to attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

The Government defines a student as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their schooling during the academic year, regardless of the reason. Missing this much school can significantly impact a child's learning and development, so we need the full support and cooperation of parents and carers to address and improve attendance.

At AS2, we carefully monitor all absences and the reasons given. If your child reaches or is approaching the persistent absentee threshold, we will inform you promptly. Students identified as persistent absentees are closely tracked, with their academic progress also monitored to understand the impact of absence on learning.

We believe in working collaboratively with families. For students with persistent absence, we will invite you to a meeting to develop a support plan. This may include involvement from the Local Attendance Adviser, Home School Liaison Worker, Local Authority, or Social Care, as appropriate, to help remove barriers to attendance and ensure your child receives the support they need.

Absence Procedures

If your child is unable to attend AS2, please follow these steps to keep us informed and ensure we can support your child effectively:

- Contact AS2 on (contact details are Office: 01462 542145, Mobile: 07399 732761 Mobile: 07359 467512) the **first day of absence** before **9:15 am** for morning sessions or **12:45 pm** for afternoon sessions. If no one is available, please leave a message on the answerphone.
- Contact the AS2 Pastoral Team **each day** your child remains absent, again before the times above.
- Ensure your child returns to AS2 as soon as they are able and provide medical evidence if requested to support the absence.

When your child is absent, we will:

- Contact you by phone or text on the first day if we have not heard from you. However, please remember it is your responsibility to inform us.
- Visit your home if we are unable to make contact by phone on the first day.
- Write to you if your child's attendance falls below 90%.
- Invite you to meet with the Provision Manager, in person or via Teams, to discuss attendance concerns if absences continue.

- Refer the situation to the Local Authority Attendance teams if attendance does not improve after these steps.

Summary

- AS2 has a responsibility to publish attendance figures to parents, mainstream schools, and Local Authorities, and to promote good attendance.
- Equally, parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend AS2 regularly, on time, every day.
- All AS2 staff are committed to working closely with families and students to support attendance, believing that partnership is the most effective way to help every child benefit fully from their education.

Annex A

The link between absence and attainment at KS4

Figure 6 Proportion of pupils in each 5% attendance band for Year 11 achieving Grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSE at the end of KS4

