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The Albany

Believe: Engage: Achieve.
Thumbs up to a new beginning!

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved

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Attendance Policy

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1. Rationale

Good school attendance supports a student's personal and academic growth. Many Albany students have previously struggled with school attendance. We aim to break this cycle.

Central to maintaining and improving attendance is the culture and ethos within the school; if a child feels safe and welcome, if they feel listened to and the learning is relevant and accessible to them, they will attend. In addition, we recognise that factors outside school can impact a student's capacity to attend or their parent/ carer(s) capacity to support them to attend. As such, The Albany policy seeks to reduce the barriers impacting attendance, challenge poor patterns of attendance and support the student and their family to enable regular school attendance.

1.1. Why is attendance at school important and what is 'good' attendance?

A Department for Education (DfE) deem a student to be 'persistently absent' from school if their attendance falls below 90%. An attendance of 90% or below means the student has been absent from school for 4 or more weeks over the school year.

The more a child is in school, the more opportunity they have to learn and make progress. The aim is for every student to aim for as close to 100% (full) attendance as possible, with a target for the school of 95% or greater. This is still up to 10 days absence during the year.

At The Albany we are committed to supporting every student to attend regularly, recognising that being at school provides not only greater opportunities to learn and thus raise attainment, but that by being in school we are supporting the social and emotional development of each student and keeping them safe from harm. This is particularly relevant in the current climate of gangs and County Lines, where absence from school increases a young person's vulnerability to becoming drawn into antisocial and dangerous behaviours.

1.2. School attendance is 'Everyone's Responsibility'

We recognise that when we work together to support and encourage school attendance we have the greatest success. At The Albany we work in partnership with the students, their parents and carers, their mainstream school, the Education Attendance Service, and other agencies who may be supporting the family and/ or the student in order to support them to attend school regularly and to access their learning without significant interruption to this from school absence.

This policy provides the framework through which all members of The Albany community work together to support our students to attend school. In doing so it also addresses the strategies we will use to challenge poor attendance, highlighting our individual roles within this.

1.3. What we aim to achieve

- To provide an environment that encourages all our students to come to school every day because they want to
- To build an awareness of why being in school and on time (punctual) matters
- To support students who find coming to school difficult, strategies to overcome those barriers and improve their attendance
- To help families support their child's attendance at school and see the worth in it
- To work in partnership with the young person, their families, mainstream schools, other agencies and the Education Attendance Team to support and encourage good attitudes to school and develop the necessary skills to attend regularly
- To ensure the school has robust procedures for recording, monitoring and analysing attendance and intervening in a timely manner

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. School Responsibilities

The school will:

- Record attendance and punctuality accurately, using DfE codes (Junior Admin Assistant)
- Respond in a timely way to all absences to ensure students are safeguarded
- Differentiate appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absences
- Recognise good and improved attendance and identify and challenge poor patterns of attendance



2.2. School Attendance Lead Role and Responsibilities

The school attendance lead has responsibility for:

- Liaising with class teachers about their class's attendance, ensuring they are aware of students whose attendance is good, improving or a concern, and the actions they need to take as a result.
- Liaise with the admin lead for attendance to ensure student attendance marks are accurate
- Liaise with our Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) about student's whose attendance is causing concern
- Implement appropriate strategies to challenge poor attendance, where necessary, in conjunction with the EWO.

2.3. Class Teacher and Support LSA Roles and Responsibilities

Each class team will:

- Provide a safe, welcoming classroom with engaging and appropriate learning activities so that their group want to be in school
- Support the students in their class to attend regularly
- Liaise with parents and carers to ensure the school is working in partnership with families to encourage and support good attendance habits.
- Liaise with the Attendance Lead where they have concerns about a student's attendance
- Implement any actions required of them by the Attendance Lead
- Report any planned student absences or any within day absences promptly (within 10 minutes) to the attendance admin lead, ensuring that any communication from families is shared via Contact Monitor on Behaviourwatch

2.4. Parent/ Carer responsibilities

The Albany expects all parents/ carers will:

- Endeavour to provide the supportive environment at home that encourages school attendance and highlights the importance of punctuality in daily life
- Communicate with school **on the first day your child is ill**, informing the school office by **telephoning 01284 754065**. Let the school know when it is likely they may return to school
- If your child attends school via a taxi, wherever possible, alert the taxi company first thing, if your child is ill and won't be coming to school (we will provide you with contact details for the taxi company).
- If you have any concerns or worries about your child's attendance or are experiencing difficulties at home persuading them to come, contact your child's class teacher who can provide support or signpost you to the appropriate support.

2.5. Student Responsibilities

Every student will:

- Ensure they build good habits for sleep and getting up, so they are ready for taxis, or catch the appropriate train or bus to arrive in school on time and ready to learn
- Contact the school if they miss their taxi, bus or train, or the public transport is late so we can ensure they still get to school.
- Ensure they attend their lessons punctually throughout the day.

3. Punctuality (Lateness) and Absence Recording

For further information and guidance on school attendance from Suffolk County Council please follow the link <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/pupil-attendance-and-welfare/school-attendance-and-penalty-notice/>

3.1. Lateness

All students should make their presence known to the school office on arrival. Our school day begins at 08:45 with an informal breakfast period. However, we recognise that for some of students who use public transport, they are not able to get into school until 09:00, usually via our



school minibus collection from the bus and train stations, so our formal curriculum begins at 09:00 with News and Views (a rethink of Form Time providing a structured student check in (personal news and views) and a review of local, national and international news stories

- A student will be **marked L: late but present**, if they arrive within 20 minutes of their official start time
- A student will be **marked U: late but absent**, if they arrive over 20 minutes after their official start time, provided the reason for lateness was within their control (e.g. dawdled to school, caught a later bus). In exceptional circumstances, (e.g. a taxi is stuck in traffic or there are problems on buses/trains) a student may arrive more than 20 minutes late but be marked present (L). In this case the Senior Leadership Team or Attendance Lead will make this decision after consideration of the reasons for lateness. At all times, the time of arrival will be recorded on Arbor.
- If a child is persistently late, parents and carers may be asked to meet with the school so we can work together to find solutions to avoid the lateness.
- A child who is repeatedly late after the register has closed (U) will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with our Attendance Lead, the student and the family to change this pattern.

3.2. Absence due to Illness (I)

If your child is too unwell to safely travel to school and engage with their learning it is important they rest at home to enable them to recover. We trust parents and carers to make that judgement for their child and ask you to inform school on the morning of their first absence and let us know when you expect them to return, keeping the school informed of their progress.

Where a child is regularly absent through illness or has a longer period of absence we may require medical evidence confirming the reason for absence. Please contact the school if the cost of this is prohibitive and we can support you to get the appropriate certification.

Absence through ill health (I) is authorised absence. However, where the school does not receive notification of the reason for absence or we have cause to believe the child may be absent for other reasons we may record the child as an unauthorised absence (O) unless we are provided medical evidence supporting the illness.

Where a student is repeatedly absent due to ill health we may write to you requesting that all further absences are supported with medical evidence. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.

Where a child has a chronic (recurrent) illness or other long term condition affecting school attendance, the school will work with you and the medical professionals supporting your child to provide appropriate access to education. Where the illness requires prolonged absence from school we will need a Consultant letter to support this.

3.3. Absence due to Medical Appointments (M)

Please inform the school in advance of the appointment, providing evidence of the purpose, date and time (e.g. an appointment letter/ card).

The school expects parents and carers to make every effort to make appointments with GPs (Doctors) and dentists outside the school day. However we recognise that urgent appointments and hospital, orthodontist and specialist appointments are usually more difficult to control.

Where your child has a medical appointment during the school day, we expect them to be in school before/ after the appointment unless there is good reason why they will need to be absent for the full day.

3.4. Term Time Holidays

Parents and carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the 14 weeks of school holiday to minimise the impact on their child's education. However, we recognise



that for some families (particularly those in seasonal employment) this may not always be possible.

Any parent or carer wishing to take their child out of school for a holiday must contact the headteacher outlining their reasons for the holiday during term time at least 4 weeks prior to the holiday. Due consideration will be given to this request.

Acceptable reasons for requesting term time holiday could be:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Parents who are subject to a strict and non-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect

The following reasons do not justify term time holidays:

- Cheaper cost of holiday
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

Taking holiday during term time may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice (£60 fine per child per parent) if the unauthorised absence reaches the trigger threshold (10 days). These are issued to any parent or carer with parental responsibilities (so a family has 2 parents and 2 children would have a total of £240 fine).

If a family take repeated holidays in term time, we will refer them to the EWO for discussion and legal action may follow.

3.5. Absence for Other Reasons (see Appendix C)

It is the parent/ carer's responsibility to:

- Inform the school in advance of the need for absence if the circumstances are known in advance (e.g. close family funeral)
- Inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent your child attending school

Where we have not received a reason for absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (O). This is commonly referred to as truancy.

3.6. Children Missing In Education (CME) (Appendix D)

A child is missing in education if the school believes they are attending our provision and we have not been able to locate them, have transferred into or out of the County and are not registered with any educational establishment or they have been permanently excluded and are not on roll with any education establishment.

A child who is on roll with us and has not attended is not CME.

Where we have concerns a child is CME we make a referral to Suffolk Local Authority using the form in Appendix D.

4. Strategies to Support Good Attendance

The Albany has a long track record of having a significant impact to improve the attendance of children who have previously found attending school difficult.

4.1. First Day Calling

We contact every parent or carer whose child is absent or has not arrived in school when they were expected. We aim to do this within 30 minutes of the absence being noticed with no explanation given. The parents/ carers will receive a text notification of the absence and be asked to contact the school. If we do not hear from you we will then telephone you to



ask about your child's absence. This safeguards your child, making sure we know where they are.

4.2. Regular Contact with Parents and Carers

Your child's class teacher will keep in touch with you at least fortnightly, working with you to ensure your child is enabled to get the most from their time at The Albany. Where there are concerns over your child's attendance they will work with you to address these concerns, often through meetings in school or home visits, ensuring that where necessary referrals to support agencies are made.

We report your child's attendance to you via their report each term. However, if your child's attendance is a cause for concern we may send you a concerns letter (see Appendix E).

4.3. Use of Part Time Timetables

Sometimes a student may be able to build up their attendance through gradually increasing their time in school each day. Where parents/ carers, the student and the school believe this strategy is would be a helpful one, and there is agreement from our EWO and/or the Family services Team, a time limited, regularly reviewed (at least fortnightly) part time timetable will be put in place. It is important that the impact of this timetable is evaluated and where it has not had the desired effect, it should be stopped. [See Appendix F].

4.4. Regular Liaison with our Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Our Attendance Lead meets regularly with our EWO to discuss children whose attendance is concerning as well as to review our strategies for managing attendance. The role of the EWO is to:

- Investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- Ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- Consider actions such as Fast Track Attendance Intervention and Education Supervision Orders and refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Attendance Service.

4.5. Use of Fixed Penalty Notices

Where we believe your child's absences are not justified and they have a total of 10 or more days (20 sessions) unauthorised absence (not necessarily all together) we may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine. This will happen if we have raised concerns with you about your child's absence pattern but their attendance has not improved, or the family have taken a period of holiday during term time without notification or for reasons we felt were not justified.

A Fixed Penalty Notice Fine is £60 if paid within 21 days; please note this is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (i.e. 2 children, 2 parent/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.

Second or subsequent unauthorised term-time holidays may be referred to the Local Authority for legal action. In these cases an EWO will be asked to investigate and will decide with the school what the best course of action should be.

5. Link to other school policies

- Relational Behaviour Management
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Staff Leave of Absence Policy and Sickness Absence Policy
- School Prospectus



Appendix A: Information for the school Website

Attendance at The Albany - Every Day Counts!

At The Albany, we aim to provide an environment that encourages all our students to attend school regularly and punctually.

To help us to promote good attendance patterns we ask parents to: -

- Ensure your child attends school regularly
- Ensure your child arrives at The Albany on time, properly dressed and with the correct equipment for the day
- Support your child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum (see notes below)
- Work in partnership with the school by attending meetings and consultations and taking an interest in your child's work and activities
- Contact the school without delay if you are concerned about any aspects of your child's school life

If your child is unable to attend The Albany parents/carers should ...

Contact the school office, preferably between 8.00 and 9.00am

If your child has a taxi provision to get to school – call the taxi company ...

To let them know the taxi is not required. We may pass the cost of the taxi to you if it comes out unnecessarily and you were able to inform them otherwise.

If a child's absence is to be for more than one day...

Please keep the school informed about your child's progress and let their class teacher or school office know when you expect them to return to school. The Albany staff will also keep in close contact with you to enquire about a child's progress.

Medical appointments:

Whenever possible, please avoid making medical/dental appointments for your child during school hours. Where this is unavoidable, then the school should be informed in advance.

Holidays:

Parents/carers do not have right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. If, however, you apply to the school in advance, the Headteacher may, in certain defined circumstances, grant up to two weeks' term-time absence in any academic year. Please see our Attendance Policy for further details.

We will be in regular contact with you concerning your child's attendance in the form of phone calls and emails to check in and celebrate good and improved attendance, first day response phone calls to inform you that your child is not in school and regular communication from your child's class teacher if there are any concerns. Please feel free to contact your child's class teacher with any queries about attendance. You can also contact our Attendance Lead via the school office.



Appendix B: A Parents' Guide to Attendance (Induction Pack)

Attending School Regularly: A Guide for Parents

When does my child need to be in School?

School starts at 8:45am with breakfast and formal learning starting at 9:00am.

What happens if my child is late?

- If your child arrives more than 20 minutes after their agreed start time, he/she will be marked absent.
- If your child arrives 5 minutes after their agreed start time, he/she will be marked late.
- Pupils who arrive after their registration time should report to the school office.
- Start times for vocational activities and work experience may vary.

Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you within thirty minutes of noticing that your child has not arrived as expected. However, we need an explanation from you as the parent as to why your child is not in school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's termly report. Your child's class teacher will contact you if necessary to remind you that an explanation of absence is needed.

What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

What is unacceptable?

The Albany will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, fishing, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The Albany operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you immediately if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. We expect to phone you within thirty minutes of your child's absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend The Albany?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

My child is trying to avoid coming to The Albany. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – e.g. difficulties with work, bullying, friendship problems, transport concerns. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend The Albany and work together to address the concerns.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with our Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.



Appendix C: A Guide to Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Leave of absence during term time	Unauthorised absence
H	Leave of absence during term time	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances



Appendix D: Suffolk CME Reporting Template

Children Missing Education – Reporting Template

If you suspect that a child is missing from education, please complete this form, giving as much information as possible.

Name of Person Completing form:

Date:

NAME OF CHILD (if known)	
DATE OF BIRTH or (Estimated age of Child)	
ADDRESS (or if not known, the Street / Area Child known to have links with / was seen in)	
DESCRIPTION OF CHILD (if not known to you): i.e. physical description, ethnicity, colour/length of hair, distinguishing features / clothes	
CIRCUMSTANCES KNOWN / or WITNESSED	
YOUR CONCERNS	
PARENT(S) NAMES & ADDRESS(ES) (if known)	
CONTACT DETAILS of Parents	
NAME of CHILD'S SCHOOL (or any school that the child may have links to)	
Contact details of Person completing the form:	

Please return to: CME@Suffolk.gov.uk

CME Template v2.1



Appendix E: Every Day Counts Attendance Concerns Letter

(On headed paper)

Attendance – Every Day Counts

Dear *parent name*,

Student Name Attendance Concerns: Percent Attendance ? % or ?/7 Broken Weeks, ? % Late Absences

At The Albany we are passionate about ensuring our students build habits and behaviours that will serve them well in the future, one of those is good school attendance. Regular attendance also provides greater opportunities to learn, thus raising attainment.

Poor attendance can be lots of irregular absences, rarely attending for a whole week (Broken Weeks) or long periods of absence (percentage attendance less than 95%). Being on time for school is also important. Any child who arrives more than 20 minutes after their start time, will be marked as late but absent (U).

I am writing to raise with you that *Student name's* attendance has met the threshold for concern for the following reason(s): *(delete as appropriate)*

% attendance =

Number of broken weeks this half term (*out of ?*) =

% sessions recorded U (late and absent) =

Missing what may seem to be only a few days here and there can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year with 90% attendance:

90% attendance	is the equivalent of ...	½ a day missed EVERY WEEK
90% attendance	is the equivalent of ...	1 day a fortnight missed
90% attendance	is the equivalent of ...	4 weeks (1 month) of lessons missed in a year
90% attendance over 5 years of school	is the equivalent of ...	½ a school year of learning missed!
Research suggests that 17 missed school days (less than 4 weeks) a year creates a GCSE Grade DROP in achievement!		

Please ensure that *name* is present at school and vocational activities unless significant illness prevents their attendance. It is important in these cases that you continue to contact the school before 8.00am with reasons for the absence, and ensure any taxis are made aware before they would leave to collect him/her.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Lead



Appendix F: Part Time Timetable Agreement

(On headed paper)

Part Time Timetable Agreement

Student Name:

Group:

Name of Class Teacher:

Name of Senior Member of Staff Authorising Reduced Hours:

Reason for reduced hours:

--

Day	Start Time	Finish Time
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

Agreed by:

Parent/ Carer signature:

Class Teacher signature:

SLT signature:

Date:

