Attendance and Punctuality Policy

“Our goal is to deliver a rigorous, engaging curriculum, to improve outcomes for all our students and provide opportunities for cultural enrichment. We want all our students to live happy, healthy and productive lives.

We are an integral part of the Portland community. Portland and Portland’s future matter to us and we will equip the children in our care with the skills, attitudes, academic qualifications and imagination needed for the complex and changing world ahead.”

Version control	
August 2026	Amendments to staff role changes and house system changes. Detention length and time.
November 2025	Updates to targets
July 2025	Amendments to gate opening times and staffing Updated tiers
February 2025	Significant amendments to all sections
July 2024	Amendment to lateness and ‘The Law’ paragraphs
July 2023	No changes

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Attendance Statement

All children of school age have the right to a full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability, or any special need they may have. Regular school attendance and excellent punctuality is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Atlantic Academy Portland takes the responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils seriously. It acknowledges that irregular attendance can disrupt continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement/low attainment, and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

We believe that the whole academy community should take responsibility for attendance. This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and well informed. The academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to ensure that children attend. All academy staff are committed to working with parents and pupils in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

It is Academy Policy to monitor and maintain attendance to a high level. Every pupil must attend every lesson of each academy day. The academy encourages a climate where high attendance is the 'norm'. Pupils are made aware of the vital connection between attendance and achievement. All staff and particularly, Tutors/Class Teachers have a crucial role to play in this process. Weekly attendance statistics are compiled and an attendance dashboard highlights the top House and Tutor Groups/Classes of the preceding week. Significant improvements and high levels of attendance are reinforced in Assemblies. Special Sense of Accomplishment Assemblies that take place termly, recognises pupils with outstanding attendance.

"Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate."

Academy Target

All Secondary pupils have a 95% attendance target all Primary Pupils have a 97% target and a 100% punctuality target.

Aim of this policy

- To emphasise the importance of and ensure students have a high level of attendance and excellent punctuality at the Academy to enable them to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.

- To make explicit to all relevant parties the Academy's expectations over attendance and punctuality expectations.

- To promote a consistent approach across the Academy to all matters relating to attendance.

- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.

- To communicate to all relevant parties (staff, governors, parents, students) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed “authorised”.

- To stress the importance for home and Academy to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

Legislation or non-statutory guidance

- Working together to improve school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities
- Guidance for parents on school attendance - Office of the Children's Commissioner
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Travel to school for children of compulsory school age
- Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions
- Keeping children safe in education 2024 (for information only)

Why regular attendance is so important

Regular attendance is vital for academic success, positive well being, promotes good mental health and encourages good habits. There is a proven link between poor Academy attendance and low achievement. Government figures show the following:

- A student with an absence level of 10% will, on average, achieve 1 grade lower across all GCSE subjects.

- Of students in the 80%-90% range, only 35% will achieve 5 9-4 grades at GCSE (including Maths and English)

Roles and Responsibilities

We all have a responsibility to ensure that ALL pupils attend the academy regularly. The academy will use all external agencies to ensure that it secures the highest possible attendance for all pupils to ensure they are given the best possible starting point in life and improving their life chances.

Parents/Carers

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Work with and support the academy ensuring that their children attend each day and on time.
- When an absence occurs, the Parent/Carer will contact the academy on 01305 820262 or by the Absence reporting contact form before 8.30am on the first day of

absence, to provide the following information: child's name and tutor group/class, reason for absence and the anticipated length of absence.
- Provide the academy with medical evidence for any absence extending beyond 5 days.
- Inform the academy immediately if there is any change in contact details.
- Notify the academy of any problems which may affect attendance and punctuality including medical conditions. Medical treatments must be evidenced.
- Arrange medical appointments outside academy hours. When this is not possible, provide the academy with a copy of the appointment letter/card.
- Arrange family holidays during periods when the academy is closed.
- Attend meetings if requested with regards to attendance or lateness as appropriate.

Pupils

We expect that in the Primary phase all pupils will:

- The Primary gate opens at 8:25am and students from Years R-6 are expected to arrive and be in classrooms by 8:40am.

In the Secondary phase:

- Students need to be in the Academy by 8.27am when the Secondary phase gate shuts.
- Registration is taken at 8.30am. Students who arrive after this will be marked as late.
- The academy opens to Secondary phase students from 8am and students may use the Dining Hall from 8am until morning tutor lineups begin at 8.27am.
- Arrive promptly for the start of each lesson.
- If late, secondary pupils will accept a sanction and this will be monitored to ensure improvement is seen. Parents/carers of primary children will be invited to attend a meeting with the class teacher if their child is late on 6 or more occasions in a half term.

The Assistant Principal for Primary and Assistant Principal for Inclusion lead on attendance.

It is the academy's responsibility to ensure that it will:

- Have a deep and clear understanding of attendance by group, such as gender, pupil Premium pupils, pupils with SEND, Children in Care and attendance by Ethnicity and Language (English/EAL).
- Act to improve the attendance of all pupils, and those that may fall into contextual groups, or the attendance of individual pupils with protected characteristics.
- Ensure staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance and have the required knowledge and skills to fulfil them.
- Regularly review the academy's attendance procedures – strengths and weaknesses, including seeking feedback from the attendance team; highlighting key issues with the Principal
- Accurate records for Attendance and Punctuality are maintained.
- Good attendance is recognised and celebrated

Attendance Team follows the procedures below:

1. Action first day of absence – Parents/Carers to be contacted by email and/or telephone calls to establish reason and eliminate the possibility of truancy. This is to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, and to identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.
2. If no response is received from either emailing or phoning the main contact, other listed contacts will be called to find out the reason for non-attendance. For any child open to Children's Social Care or the School Inclusion Team, they will also be notified at this time This is a safeguarding procedure to ensure that no harm has come to the child, as they may have left home and not arrived at Atlantic Academy Portland.
3. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be considered by a member of the academy Safeguarding team and/or a local authority professional to ascertain the safety and well-being of the child and the reason for their absence from school.
4. Atlantic Academy Portland has a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for **10 consecutive days.** If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the **Child is Missing from Education (CME)**. The Local Authority will be notified to locate the child.
5. Monitor students that are persistently absent or late and refer to the local authority inclusion team when necessary. While it is primarily parents' responsibility to ensure their children attend the academy, Efforts are made to support students and families who are struggling to attend
6. Maintain accurate records for attendance and punctuality.

Safeguarding and Attendance

The academy will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of its standard procedures. However, it is recognised that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, Local Procedures and the Academy's Safeguarding Policy, staff will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities.

As part of the academy's safeguarding duty and standard procedures, staff will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when they cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

If a pupil is not attending as required, where the academy deems it appropriate, staff may make home visits to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers as part of the academy's safeguarding and attendance processes. If staff are unable to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family, who they reasonably expect may be able to provide the academy with relevant information

The Academy Day - Present, Punctuality and Lateness

Registers in Primary will be taken in the morning upon students arrival and after lunch. Registers in Secondary will be taken for all periods of the day. All registers are completed electronically using the Academy MIS (Arbor). Pupils are marked present if they are in the academy when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the academy premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

Morning Registration

- The Academy school day runs from 08.27am to 15.00pm, Monday – Friday, term time.
- The gates open at 08.00am to allow for a staggered, calm start to the day but all pupils must arrive by 08.30am on each school day.
- Pupils arriving after 08.27am will be marked as late (L) – which still counts as present.
- If a pupil arrives after the close of registration (after 09:00am), they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (U) for the morning session. If a pupil arrives late after the registers close due to a valid reason, such as an unavoidable medical appointment, their absence will be marked with the appropriate authorised absence code.

Afternoon Registration

- The afternoon register is taken at 12.30pm and will be kept open until 13:00pm.
- If a pupil has been out of school during the morning and arrives at school after 12.30 but before 13:00pm, they will be marked (L), which counts as present.
- If a pupil arrives after 13:00pm they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (U) for the afternoon session. If a pupil arrives late after the afternoon registers close due to a valid reason, such as an unavoidable medical appointment, their absence will be marked with the appropriate authorised absence code.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable.

Due to the need to ensure punctuality to both the academy and lessons, pupils must realise lateness is unacceptable. When a pupil arrives late to the academy, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions; this can seriously disadvantage pupils and their learning.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost.

Minutes late per day	Days of teaching lost in one year	Which means number of lessons missed
5 minutes	3 days	18 lessons
10 minutes	6 days	36 lessons

15 minutes	9 days	54 lessons

If pupils are late to lessons, the teacher will follow this up. If the lateness persists, it will be referred to the tutor, Head of House and House Assistant Principal Head. Poor punctuality to the academy will be dealt with initially by the tutor and subsequently through the line management system. Leaders will want to contact parents/carers of perpetual offenders and will also refer them to the Attendance Officer.

Late Detention System

If a pupil is late to the academy, they need to sign in at the main office. All lates are entered as an (L). Secondary aged pupils arriving late will complete a 30 minute late detention at lunchtime. When a pupil's late arrival is caused by reasons beyond the pupils control e.g. bus breaks down, the pupil will be marked as late but they will not receive a late detention. Pupils who are persistently late will be set a 1 hour after-school detention and could result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the local authority.

Absence

Non-attendance at the academy for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. Every case is different and there is no standard path that can be followed in applying intervention strategies. In some cases, prosecution may be used as the last resort when other intervention strategies have failed to bring about an improvement in attendance. In other cases, prosecution may be the only appropriate response where acting early will prevent problems from worsening. In all cases of non-attendance, it is essential that early action is taken.

We are required by law to provide reasons for student absences so that our register accurately reflects students' attendance. As a parent/carer it is your responsibility to contact the academy through our online Absence reporting contact form or by phone on 01305 820262 by 8:30am **on each day of absence** providing a reason for absence so that we are aware of the absence. Please note that this does not mean the absence is authorised.

Please avoid arranging appointments for your child during the Academy day. If this is unavoidable, please advise Atlantic Academy at the earliest opportunity giving details of the appointment. A copy of the appointment card or hospital appointment letter should be provided either when collecting or returning your child.

Recording absences

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made

Categories of Authorised Absence

- Treatment for illness supported by medical evidence.
- If your child is unwell and sent home from the Academy.
- Hospital, CAMHS or Orthodontic Appointments **supported by appointment letters or cards.**
- Unavoidable GP or dental appointments **supported by cards or slips.**
- Advance notice of days of religious observance.
- A student excluded for a fixed period while remaining on roll with Atlantic Academy.

Categories of Unauthorised Absence include but are not limited to:

- Truancy through the Academy day
- Parents or carers keeping children off Academy unnecessarily, including collection during the Academy day
- No reason for absence given.
- Students who arrive at Atlantic Academy after 9am when registration has closed.
- Holidays and day trips in term time.

Absence requests during term time

All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and will be considered on a case by case basis.

The Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The following would be considered as 'exceptional circumstances', and you may be asked to provide written evidence of this.

- Return of parent from active service (Forces)
- Death or terminal illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling
- Young Carers
- Disability or respite leave

The following are examples which may not be counted as exceptional circumstances and may lead to requests not being granted:

- Cheaper holiday dates
- Attendance at a wedding or christening
- Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK
- Limitations on parents/carers leave

Only the parent/carer the child resides with can make an application for a Leave of Absence. Requesting Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Principal, by completing an online contact form available on the Academy website.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of

absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion. If leave of absence is taken without authorisation, it will be considered as an unauthorised absence.

Attendance and the law

Persistent Absence and/or '10 in 10'
Persistent absence is when a pupil's attendance falls below 90% in any academic year. We acknowledge, in a small number of cases, medical reasons can cause a pupil's attendance to fall into this category and is beyond the control of parents/carers and pupils.

Working Together to Improve School Attendance 19 August 2024 notes "Persistent absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues in a pupil's life, and barriers to attendance are often specific to local contexts".

'10 in 10' is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

The academy and the law are very clear, it is a parental responsibility to ensure that your child attends the academy regularly. When monitoring attendance, we also undertake a trend analysis to identify whether pupils are more likely to be absent on any particular day. When a pupil reaches the persistent absence threshold, the academy reserves the right to conduct a home visit on the first day of each episode of absence to verify the absence and identify any further support. If the academy is in receipt of independent medical evidence, then we will carry out home visits to support your child's education and welfare. The academy will also conduct home visits, at our discretion, where we have concerns over a child's attendance or punctuality at the academy.

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year or 10 days over 10 weeks), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils.

Penalty Notices
When necessary, the academy, Trust and local authority will use a range of legal interventions to support improvement in attendance. These will be determined by the academy and local authority on a case by case basis after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

These interventions are:

- Attendance contracts (formerly known as parenting contracts)
- Education supervision orders

- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices

It is an offence under the 1996 Education Act if a child of compulsory Academy age fails to attend regularly the Academy/School where they are registered and parents are at risk of prosecution under the Act unless those absences have been authorised.

As an alternative to prosecution, parents may be placed on the Attendance Panel Process or issued with a Penalty Notice payable to the local authority. Following recent amendments to the Education (Student Registration) (England) 2006 regulations which came into effect on 01/09/2013, each parent may be fined for each child if the parents allow the child to take unauthorised leave within term time.

From Autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period. This includes if a student has moved school or local area during that period. In the case that a second notice is issued within that period it will be charged at a higher rate. The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school. There are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.

The regulations make it clear that the Principal may only grant leave for holidays in term time under 'exceptional circumstances.' In the case of excluded students who remain on roll at Atlantic Academy, a Penalty Notice may be issued where a student is found by the Academy, Police or Local Authority service in a public place in Academy hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Home Educating
Below is guidance from the DFE for parents/carers who intend to 'Home Educate' their child.

'4.2 If your child is currently on the roll of a school you are not obliged to inform the school that he or she is being withdrawn for home education or gain consent for this. However, it is

sensible to do so, in order to avoid subsequent misunderstandings as to how you intend to fulfil your parental responsibility for your child's education. The school is obliged to inform the local authority of children removed from its admission register and will give home education as the reason, if notified of this by the parent. Parents of children withdrawn from school for home education are not legally obliged to inform the local authority themselves - but again it is sensible to do so, either directly or using any local registration scheme which exists, to facilitate access to advice and support.

3.4 Remember that pressure should never be put on you as parents by a school to remove your child from a school to avoid formal exclusion, or because your child is having difficulty with learning or behaviour. This practice - sometimes called 'off-rolling' - is unacceptable, and if pressure of this sort is put on you by any state-funded school you should inform the local authority.'

Elective home education Departmental guidance for parents – DFE April 2019

Children Missing Education

The *Children Missing Education* (CME) statutory guidance for local authorities mandates that schools have a legal duty to refer pupils to the local authority if they have been continuously absent for ten or more school days without contact. If Atlantic Academy Portland is unable to establish communication with a pupil and their parent or carer over this period, a formal referral will be made. However, if there is an urgent safeguarding or welfare concern, the academy will immediately escalate the matter to social care services.

Before making a referral, the academy will attempt to contact all emergency contacts listed for the pupil if the primary carer cannot be reached. Given that CME is fundamentally a safeguarding concern, the school must comply with its statutory duty by providing as much relevant information as possible, including the pupil's full name, the full name and address of any parent or carer with whom the child normally resides, and at least one contact telephone number for the parent or carer.

To support this process and ensure the safety of all pupils, parents and carers must keep their contact details updated in the school's system, ensuring that at least three emergency contacts are listed. If the school cannot make contact within a ten-day period, the pupil will be formally referred to the Local Authority as a *Child Missing Education*.

There is an expectation that schools will provide the following information:

- The full name of the pupil
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carer It is important that parents/carers check that their information held on the school system is up to date and there are at least three listed contacts

Supporting attendance

Supportive timetables

In order to support attendance, pupils may be placed upon supportive timetables, due to a variety of different reasons. The Inclusion team will communicate daily with the staff working with the child to ensure that registers and pupil attendance records are accurate.

Supporting pupils with Medical Conditions

Atlantic Academy Portland understands that pupils with medical conditions may have implications that could affect their attendance to the academy, and/or lessons during the academy day. Pupils with medical conditions will be supported, so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. The Aspirations Academies Trust will ensure that arrangements are in place in Atlantic Academy Portland to support pupils with medical conditions. Ensuring that leaders consult health and social care professionals, pupils, and parents/carers to ensure that the needs of children with medical conditions are properly understood and effectively supported. Further information can be found in the Atlantic Academy Portland Medical Policy.

Reluctant attendees and school refusers

Parents/carers should do everything possible to encourage school attendance. However, if the reason for reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the Academy at the earliest opportunity and Atlantic Academy Portland will do everything possible to resolve the issue. Colluding with a child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse. Please speak with your child's Tutor, Head of House, House Assistant Principal, Pastoral Support Leader, Attendance Officer or a member of the Inclusion team (inclusion@atlantic-aspirations.org) if your child starts to become reluctant to attend school.

Absences from Public Examinations

When students are disadvantaged during their exams, examination boards can sometimes make mark adjustments as part of a process called 'special consideration.' If a student is fully prepared for the exam but is disadvantaged due to illness or unavoidable circumstances beyond their control at the time of the exam or when they complete their coursework/controlled assessment. The percentage is determined by using the guidelines agreed by all the awarding bodies and published by the Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ).

If a student is absent from an exam for a valid reason a mark is calculated for the missing unit provided the student has completed enough of the specification to meet the minimum requirements specified by JCQ – this is known as a 'z-score'. The calculation of the missing mark takes into account the student's performance in the other comparable units of the exam and the national average for those units. The assumption is that the student will perform as well – no better, no worse – on the paper with the missing mark compared to their performance on the other papers when compared to the national cohort.

Special consideration can only ever go some way towards compensating a student who has been disadvantaged during an exam. It is not always possible to reflect what might have been achieved in more favourable circumstances.

JCQ guide to the special consideration process - Effective from 1 September 2025.

Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

Atlantic Academy Portland recognises that rewarding good and improved attendance should be carefully considered in order to ensure it does not make pupils who have poor attendance feel marginalised, worried or guilty about their low rate. The academy will regularly review and reward systems to ensure they are not negatively impacting on individual pupils or groups of pupils.

Monitoring attendance

Atlantic Academy Portland implements a 6-stage system of escalating support and rewards, in order to ensure that pupils and parents/carers maintain, and/or improve attendance. In addition to the continuous monitoring of attendance by the Attendance Lead and other members of staff, the Academy's attendance is reviewed every half term by the Assistant Principals responsible for Attendance, the wider Leadership team and reported to Regional Board members from Aspirations Academy Trust.

Attendance Tiers

Numbers relate to sessions not days (ie 2 sessions = 1 day)

97% +	Recognise with positive messaging - text, conversation, phone call, postcard etc
<96% **10 absences or 4 unauthorised**	Stage 1 Conversation -phone call or gate conversation (Tutor/ class teacher)
95%-93% **15 absences or** **8 unauthorised**	Stage 2 YELLOW - Letter and call (Head of House
92% **30 absences or 10 unauthorised**	Stage 3 - AMBER - Letter and Phone call to arrange SAMeeting. Action plan put in place at SAM *NB unauthorised - 10 sessions OR authorised 30 sessions*
90% **40 absences (or further unauthorised after the SAM)** **Or >10 unauthorised**	Stage 4 - RED - letter and formal meeting Review of the action plan and how this has not brought about the improvement needed. Informed about the LA procedures that will follow if no improvement Further plan agreed

<90%	LA attendance processes followed (SLT Attendance Champion)