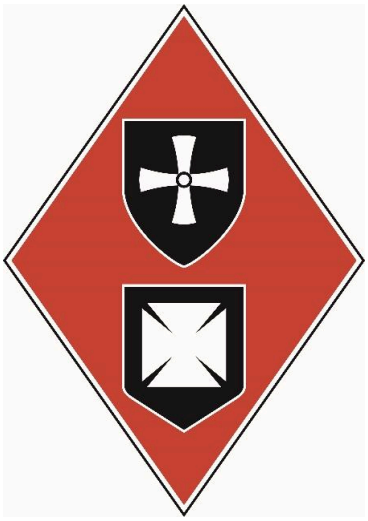
Date: September 2026

Review: September 2027

Responsibility: SMT (JD & DJR)



DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOL

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Aims

At Dame Allan's School, we see education as a partnership between the family and the School. The School is committed to providing the highest quality of education for pupils and we look to parents to support this objective.

We are committed to meeting our obligation about school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Board of Governors

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy
- The link governor for attendance is Vanessa Morrell who can be contacted via the clerk to the governors, Vicki McDonald va.mcdonald@dameallans.co.uk

2.2 The Principal

The Principal holds overall responsibility for ensuring that Dame Allan's School fulfils statutory duties regarding school attendance and that attendance remains a key strategic priority across all settings.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality across the whole school community.
- Ensuring compliance with statutory duties and the DfE's guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)*, including the maintenance of accurate registers and data returns to the Local Authority.
- Ensuring leadership accountability, by appointing a Senior Attendance Champion with clear authority to drive improvement and by providing visible support and oversight for their work.
- Monitoring performance and progress, including reviewing attendance data and trends regularly with the Director of Senior School (Senior Attendance Champion),

the Director of Pupil Wellbeing, Director of Sixth Form and Head of Junior School, and reporting to governors on areas of success or concern.

- Ensuring adequate resourcing, including sufficient staffing, time, and professional development to enable effective attendance monitoring and intervention.
- Representing the school's commitment to attendance externally, including working collaboratively with the Local Authority, safeguarding partners, and other schools to share best practice and remove wider barriers to attendance.

2.3 The Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion holds overall strategic responsibility for championing, leading and improving attendance. This role sits within the senior leadership team and ensures that attendance is recognised as a whole-school priority.

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading and coordinating attendance strategy across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring attendance processes and ensuring consistency in application across the school.
- Having a strong grasp of attendance data, including patterns of absence and pupil cohorts at risk, and ensuring this data informs targeted intervention.
- Devising and implementing strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data analysis.
- Working in partnership with the Director of Pupil Wellbeing, Director of Sixth Form, Head of the Junior School, and relevant pastoral and administrative teams to ensure timely, appropriate, and supportive intervention for pupils and families.
- Overseeing communication with parents and carers, including leading or arranging meetings and calls to discuss attendance concerns and develop agreed actions.
- Promoting and modelling a whole-school culture that values attendance, including visible celebration of good and improving attendance.

The Senior Attendance Champion is David Ridley, who is the Director of Senior School supported by the Director of Pupil Wellbeing.

2.4 Class teachers/form tutors

All pupils are registered twice a day: before the start of morning school and immediately after lunch. Class teachers (DAJS)/form tutors (DAS) are responsible for recording attendance on our electronic database twice a day, at morning and afternoon registration.

2.5 School office

School office staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on ISAMS.
- Relay information from parents to the relevant Head of Year/Head of School to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Telephone home on the first day of an unexplained absence to make sure that your child is where you expect them to be and to ensure they are safe.

2.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Notify the school if their child is ill as soon as possible. Parents should use My School Portal or telephone the school before 8:30am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence.
- There is an answerphone on which parents can leave a message at any time when the school is closed and which is checked as soon as the office opens as well as throughout the day.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, wherever possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- arrange holidays outside of school term dates. The school always sends parents the term dates well in advance so that parents can arrange holidays without disrupting their child's education. Requests for term-time holidays will not be authorised.
- make any requests for absence by completing a Leave Request Form, via My School Portal, at least 48 hours in advance (except in an emergency, when parents are asked to telephone the school before 08:30)

2.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Be in school by 08:25 at the latest (Senior School) or 08:45 for Dame Allan's Junior School pupils (unless otherwise stated).
- With the exception of pupils in Years 12 and 13, pupils are not allowed to leave the

site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff for a trip or to visit a sporting fixture, the dates of which will have been notified to parents in advance.

- Senior School pupils who leave the site during the day for authorised appointments are required to sign out at reception. Junior School pupils must be signed out by parents at the school office.
- Year 12 and 13 students must sign in and out using the Queen's Building if they leave the site for any reason.

3 Recording Attendance

3.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school 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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional

circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.2 Registration and late arrivals - Senior School

Pupils must arrive by 8:25am each school day.

- The morning register will be taken between 8:30am and 8:35am.
- Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9:00am will be recorded as late (code L) for the morning session.
- Pupils arriving after 9:00am will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence (code U) or other relevant code to explain why they arrived after 9.00am.

The afternoon register will be taken between 1:30pm and 1:35pm.

- Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 2:00pm will be recorded as late (code L) for the afternoon session.
- Pupils arriving after 2:00pm will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence (code U) for the afternoon session.

Persistent lateness, whether before or after the register closes, will be treated as a cause for concern and may lead to further intervention in line with the school's attendance procedures.

3.3 Registration and late arrival - Junior School

Pupils must arrive by 8:45am each school day.

- The morning register will be taken between 8:50am and 9:00am.
- Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9:20am will be recorded as late (code L) for the morning session.
- Pupils arriving after 9:20am will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence (code U) for the morning session.

The afternoon register will be taken between 12:55pm and 1:05pm.

- Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 1:25pm will be recorded as late (code L) for the afternoon session.
- Pupils arriving after 1:25pm will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence (code U) for the afternoon session.

Persistent lateness, whether before or after the register closes, will be treated as a cause for concern and may lead to further intervention in line with the school's attendance procedures.

3.4 Absence due to illness

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school if the pupil will be absent due to illness on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office or using My School Portal.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. The school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card, or another appropriate form of evidence.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the School will provide the Local Authority with the full name and address of any pupil of compulsory school age who has been marked absent due to illness and whom the School has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, due to sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

3.5 Planned absence

Parents should notify the school of planned absences as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Attending a medical or dental appointment is classed as planned absence and will be counted as authorised.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

3.6 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, we will take further action as per the missing child policy.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for

absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the absence continues, the school will contact our safeguarding partners for advice.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

It is expected that there may be occasions when pupils are late to school for reasons beyond their control; however, it is expected that all pupils must be on time to school every day.

Senior school pupils are permitted to be late to school once in any 5-day period but should they be late twice in a 5-day period they will be placed in a lates detention.

- Detention for being late will take place on a Tuesday lunchtime from 12:25 – 13:00.
- Detentions will be supervised by a senior member of staff, usually the VP (Pastoral)
- Pupils will be expected to bring work to do in the detention or will be given appropriate work by the teacher in charge.
- Repeated appearances in lates detention may see pupils removed from form time for a defined period where solutions to address repeated tardiness will be discussed and found.
- Persistent lateness will be seen as a breach of the school rules and may see a pupil moved on to the behaviour levels if not addressed.

3.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels as part of our reporting schedule.

The Head of School will contact parents when the overall attendance of their child falls below 90% where appropriate to ensure they are aware of this figure and to offer guidance and support. Figures will be reviewed every half term.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

Approval for planned absence will only be to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be an 'exceptional circumstance'. This is granted at the discretion of the Head of School including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

The school considers each application for planned absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. Evidence may be required to support any request for a leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include but are not limited to:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance: where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Attendance at a university open day.
- Exceptional family commitments.
- High level sporting representation.

4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) the parent/carer should advise the school of their temporary address

4.3 Strategies for promoting attendance

The importance of high levels of attendance and punctuality is reinforced through staff training, pupil assemblies, and in our behaviour policy. An overall attendance figure is also included in our written reports to parents.

4.4 Attendance monitoring

Heads of School are provided with a fortnightly update on the attendance figures by the Data Manager. Those pupils whose attendance falls below 90% are highlighted and parents are informed accordingly.

The Heads of School and Designated Safeguarding Leads attend termly meetings with the local authority Access and Attendance Officer who offers advice regarding pupil absence.

4.3 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Anonymised pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

4.4 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to Director of Senior School, Director of Sixth Form and the Head of the Junior School, and other school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

4.5 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (school-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

4.6 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and as a minimum annually by SMT. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Missing child policy

4.7 Statutory Attendance Returns to the Local Authority

The school will provide the local authority with the details of all pupils of compulsory school age who 'fail to attend school regularly' (not counting any occasion on which the pupil was attending another school, attending educational provision arranged by a local authority, or attending a visit or other approved educational activity). Regular attendance means attending all sessions, for the full duration of those sessions, except where there is a statutory reason.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of working together to improve school attendance (2026) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold

- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance (Effective practice examples)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024. The use of the codes were clarified in July 2026 - 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2026'

Code	Definition	Scenario
Attending the school		
/	Present (am)	The pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	The pupil is present at the afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	The pupil arrives late but before the end of registration period.
Attending a place other than the school		
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
K	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the local authority
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity provided by an external party and approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised and approved by the school
W	Work experience	The pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution
M	Medical/dental appointment	The pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade
Not a possible attendance		

Q	Lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y1	No available transport	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on a holiday or other leisure/recreational activity that was not approved by the school

N	Reason not provided	The circumstances of the pupil's absence has not yet been established. The correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained but no more than 5 school days later. If a reason cannot be established within 5 school days, the code must be amended to O.
O	Unauthorised absence	No reason is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is not considered valid for any of the codes classified as authorised.
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and missed the whole of the registration period.

Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
Administrative Codes		
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day