



Verulam School Attendance Guidance 2026-27

The Ambition Education Trust Attendance Policy can be found on the school website. The following guidance provides more detailed, school specific information to support families to understand attendance at Verulam School.

1. Understanding attendance at Verulam School

a. Attendance categories:

The attendance of all students is monitored through a centralised tracking system. Students are placed in one of five attendance stages below based on their cumulative attendance. Attendance will be monitored using overall % except for the first half term where the raw number of sessions will be analysed. The table below indicates the likely actions and support in place for students in each category:

Group	Attendance	Likely impact	Action/ notification
Stage 0:	96% - 100%	No Concern	
Stage 1:	94% - 95.9%	Early flag	Letter 1a
Stage 2:	90% - 93.9%	Risk of underachievement	Letter 1b
Stage 3:	85 - 89.9%	Severe risk of underachievement (Persistently absent)	Letter 2
Stage 4:	50% - 84.9%	Extreme risk of underachievement (Persistently absent)	External referral/ support. Possible Notice to Improve and legal intervention.
Stage 5:	Below 50%	Critical risk of underachievement (Severely absent)	Possible Notice to Improve and legal intervention. External referral/ support.

b. Persistent and severe absence:

A pupil is classified as a Persistent Absentee when their attendance falls to 90% or below (equivalent to missing 10% or more of their schooling) across the academic year to date. Parents and Carers will be asked to meet with the school to review why their child's



attendance is within this category and to put a support plan in place in order to raise attendance.

A pupil is classified as a Severe Absentee when their attendance falls to 50% or below (equivalent to missing 50% or more of their schooling) across the academic year to date. At this point multiple parent meetings and a suite of support will be in place. The school will refer to the appropriate external agency and be working with families and Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Team to improve attendance.

c. Attend system

A platform called 'Attend' is used to monitor and support attendance. Messages from the Attend app will appear separately from the main school communications. Each message will be tailored to the individual student and will often contain specific information such as the number of lessons missed in each subject.

d. Key staff

Kate Thackray, Deputy Headteacher leads on attendance at the school and oversees attendance in Years 7-11. Stephen Base, Director of Sixth Form, oversees attendance in Years 12 & 13.

The Attendance Officers are Carli Wong (7-11) and Deborah Smith (12 & 13). Attendance is monitored weekly by each year group's Head of Year.

Any member of staff can be contacted via the Admin email address:

admin@verulam.aetrust.uk or absence email address: absence@verulam.aetrust.uk

2. Day to day procedures

a. Attendance registers

Registers are taken at 8:40am (beginning of tutor time) and within the first 5 minutes of every lesson throughout the day. Registers close at 9:20am. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

b. Punctuality

Students arriving during the registration period but after their names have been called will be marked as late. Students arriving after 8.50am in the morning must sign in via the designated signing in/out screen located at Reception or the Sixth Form Centre (for sixth form students only).



If a student arrives late to school without an acceptable explanation they will be issued with an 'E-Basic' - a 30 minutes lunch time detention - to be sat the same day. Where a student is regularly late for school, parents/carers will be contacted by the relevant Head of Year who will work with the student and parent/carer to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

All lateness to lessons will be challenged by teachers. If a student is late to a lesson by 5 minutes or more, they will be given an E2 break or lunch time detention. If a student is late to a lesson by 15 minutes or more, they will be given an E6 after school truancy detention.

c. Reporting absence

Parents/carers should inform the school by 8.00am if they know that their child will be absent on that day. This should be done by telephoning the school and leaving a message on the attendance line; 01727 766100 or by emailing the absence inbox; absence@verulam.aetrust.uk If a student is in Year 12 or 13, there is a separate absence email: sixthform@verulam.aetrust.uk

The student's name, form and reason for their absence should be given. In the event of an emergency, parents should call the school who will advise the relevant member of the Pastoral team.

If a student is absent from school without an explanation for the absence from the parent/carer, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

d. Leaving and returning during the school day

Students who need to leave the school during the day for medical appointments or other reasons are required to submit a parent/carer explanation in advance. The student should then sign out in the designated smart platform located in Reception, or at the Sixth Form Centre, (Yr12&13). Students must sign back into school upon their return.

We recommend that, where possible, all medical/ dental appointments are booked outside of school hours.

e. Authorising absences

Schools must clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences of students of compulsory school age. The responsibility for authorising absences rests with the school.

Written or verbal parental communication does not in itself constitute authorisation. Parents/carers must provide an explanation for all absences from school. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. In



line with DfE guidance, we have to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday and therefore it is likely that a penalty fine will be issued.

3. Sanctions

Verulam school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions including, but not limited to, those listed below to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case by case basis.

a. Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), the local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks),
- whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil,
- whether further support, a notice to improve, or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

- The National Framework for for penalty notices came into effect from 19th August 2024 and will apply to all forms of unauthorised absence from school, including unauthorised holiday's during term time.

A new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.

A penalty fine can be issued for any combination of unauthorised absences over a 10 week rolling period. They can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms.



A 'session' is equal to a morning or afternoon registration, therefore 5 days of absence =10 sessions.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence.aspx>

b. Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

Full details about legal sanctions are detailed in the AET Attendance Policy.

4. Supporting attendance

a. Interventions and support

Interventions to support the improvement of student attendance can be implemented at any time and can include:

- Parent meetings with the Head of Year and Heads of Key Stage
- Attendance referrals to the Local Authority Attendance Officer
- Attendance support plans
- Counselling/Mentoring
- Attendance goal setting
- Timetable reviews

b. Guidance about illness and absences

If absences for illness occur frequently and regularly, the school may request medical evidence to support the frequency of absences. Students are expected to attend school if they have a minor ailment. This includes, but is not limited to, a cold or cough, headaches, period pains or tummy aches.

NHS guidance has been issued to help understand whether to send a child to school or not if they are unwell. If the authenticity of illnesses is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for evidence unnecessarily. We encourage



parents/carers to arrange medical/dental appointments outside of school hours. However, if a student is required to attend a medical appointment during the school day, they should be out of school for the minimum amount of time possible, and should not take a whole day's absence to attend an appointment.

To report an absence due to a medical or dental appointment please contact the school Attendance Team via the Absence Line: 01727 766100 or Absence inbox: absence@verulam.aetrust.uk.

Advanced notice and evidence of an appointment is required for authorising absences in these circumstances.

c. Absence through participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and sport

Parents/carers can seek leave of absence from school for a student to take part in a performance. To request this, parents must submit a request in writing to the headteacher, in advance. Parents/carers should outline the nature and frequency of the work or activity, whether the student has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer/organiser during the leave of absence. It is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this under these circumstances.

The Headteacher may wish to discuss with parents how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any agreed absence recorded as part of a student's participation in a public performance is recorded as an authorised absence. Permission for a student to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

d. Reduced timetables

Students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. A reduced timetable is only permitted in exceptional circumstances. The DFE's statutory attendance guidance expects that reduced timetables are:

- Only agreed on a temporary basis, stating a proposed end date when they're expected to return to school full time and must not be a long-term solution. Reduced timetables should not extend a period of more than 6 weeks.
- A last resort to support a student in accessing full-time education.

It is the Headteacher's decision to agree what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances'. All other avenues of in-school support and intervention must be considered and implemented prior to reducing a student's timetable. Where there are safeguarding concerns, the DSL must be involved in the decision to permit a reduced timetable.



e. Emotional-based school non-attendance

Where a student is affected by emotional-based school non-attendance, the school will work closely with parents/carers, the student, and external agencies where necessary, to provide a package of support for the student. The school will implement a graduated approach to support, providing early help as soon as absence starts to become a concern, focusing on understanding and removing the barriers of attendance in partnership with the family. The aim of this will be to reintegrate the student back into education by working together to address concerns.

This may include:

- An attendance support plan
- A welfare support plan
- In-school interventions
- A temporary reduced timetable with a planned review process to return to full time education
- Referral to CAMHS or to Early help
- Referral to the the AET Trust Attendance Lead as an additional supportive agency
- Referral to ESMA if there is sufficient medical evidence

Appendix:

Useful links:

AET Attendance Policy

[Hertfordshire Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance: Parents Guide](#)

[Hertfordshire guidance for penalty notices for unauthorised absences](#)

[Verulam - Leave of Absence Request Form](#)