

The American School in London

Attendance Policy: Lower School

The current version of any policy, procedure, protocol or guideline is the version held on the ASL website. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are following the most up-to-date version.

Responsible Party	Lower School Principal
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Approval date	November 2023

ASL is mindful of its responsibility under the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (August 2024) to ensure students attend school. ASL commits to working with families to ensure that all barriers to attendance are addressed and removed where possible. ASL commits to supporting full attendance, to monitoring and reporting on attendance and to using attendance data to ensure we are informed about any concerning patterns of absenteeism.

The Attendance Policy is based on the school's mission and the ASL Portrait of a Learner and reflects our core values and all applicable UK laws and regulations. Students in the Lower School have the right to an excellent education that excites and challenges them in a safe learning environment, to engage actively and constructively in school-sponsored events and activities with other members of the community, to feel cared for and valued as individuals, and to express respectfully their beliefs and opinions. Students in the Lower School contribute to the learning and social

environment and also have the responsibility of upholding the school's values. ASL's expectations for all lower school community members are outlined below.

Expectations

ASL expects that LS parents will make every effort to understand and respect school policies, including the Attendance Policy. All members of the school community share the responsibilities that come with the privilege of being part of our community.

To that end, we expect parents/guardians to help their children, and other ASL students in their care, to make positive and healthy choices. Absences impact teachers who may have to reteach material as well as modify assessments. ASL's Lower School Attendance policy is based on the premise that students must be present at school to learn at their highest potential. Please note that in addition to classes, attendance is mandatory at assemblies, morning meetings, grade-level gatherings, other events during the school day and school-sponsored trips, which are all integral parts of an ASL education.

Attendance at school aligns with the ASL core values, and in particular with our efforts to instill in Lower School children a sense of responsibility. This is described in our values statements in the following terms:

Responsibility

We take ownership of our words, actions and learning.

We fulfill our obligations to ourselves and to others.

Interactions with others

Students should be mindful of the feelings of others in the community and treat everyone as they would like to be treated themselves. ASL students do not engage in disrespectful language, teasing or bullying.

Attendance

It is critical for students to attend classes regularly and on time. Parents/guardians are required to inform the School in a timely manner of any absences.

Attendance is taken at the beginning of the day and students' presence or absence at school is confirmed for the afternoon session. Where a student's absence is noted and no reason for that absence is on record, the Lower School administrative staff will contact the missing student's parent or legal guardian without undue delay to enquire about the student's whereabouts and wellbeing.

In accordance with statutory safeguarding guidance, ASL will continue to keep at least two contact numbers for every child registered at the school. If there is no response to any contact attempt, and a child's whereabouts and/or well-being cannot be established, the Lower School administrative staff or the DSL will make contact with the appropriate safeguarding partner.

We believe that classroom learning experiences are a meaningful and essential part of a student's education. Even if a student makes up work while out of school or on their return, the classroom experience simply cannot be replicated. Absent students miss out on the opportunity to ask clarifying questions in class or discuss concepts with a classmate. Also, an absent student misses out on the social-emotional connections to their peers, teachers and staff in the community, which can make re-entry increasingly difficult. Furthermore, students who are in attendance may miss out on collaboration with and contributions from their absent peers.

We understand that there will be days when sickness or other special circumstances necessitate a student missing school. Please note, however, that the School strongly discourages the extension of vacations and other recreational travel to include scheduled school days. Families should actively monitor school attendance, in accordance with divisional policies, to minimize the educational impact of absences on their students and the broader school community.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and students to ensure that students maintain satisfactory attendance. It is the responsibility of the administration to ensure that satisfactory attendance records are maintained. Parents/guardians of students absent from school are asked to inform the LOWER school office, lsattendance@asl.org or 020 7449 1291, no later than 8:30 am. If a student is absent and the office has not been contacted by 8:30 am, the attendance officer will contact parents/guardians.

Absences

ASL recognizes that absence from school does and will occur. In recognition of this fact, the student Attendance Policy classifies absences into one of three categories.

Excused absences

When it is necessary for a student to be absent, the following reasons shall be accepted as excused absences.

Excused for non school-related reasons:

Medical

- illness
- medical appointments

A physician's note is required for three or more consecutive absences which are due to illness.

Personal

- family emergencies (i.e., serious illness or death in the immediate family) that require the presence of the student
- legal or religious duties that cannot be carried out after regular school hours
- other reasons as approved by the administration

Excused for school-related reasons:

- participation in a school-sponsored activity, day trip, or overnight field trip

Unexcused absences

Unexcused absences are all absences not defined in excused absences. The following are examples of unexcused absences:

- absence for personal or family trips, including extending school holiday breaks
- any absence not approved as an excused absence by the administration

Arrival and departure

Students in Grades 1-4 should be in their classrooms at 8:05 AM. Students in K1 and K2 should be in their classrooms at 8:20 AM. Students may not enter the building before 7:55 am.

P rearranged absence

Parents/guardians should email lsattendance@asl.org to seek approval for a pre-arranged absence for a student or to inform the Lower School office if the absence is connected to a medical appointment. Absences such as medical appointments are considered excused, however, absences for holidays or extended travel times may be considered unexcused. The lower school office will respond with a decision of excused or unexcused to requests for any prearranged

Medical appointments

Medical appointments should be scheduled outside of normal school hours, if possible. Students who must miss any part of the school day for a medical appointment must bring a written note from a parent/guardian, or send an email to lsattendance@asl.org to the lower school office, and the parent/guardian must sign the child in and out of the office as appropriate.

Tardiness and class attendance

All students should arrive at school on time each day. In addition to being a valuable life skill and fostering a sense of respect for school and the work that is done there, prompt arrival will ensure that students have enough time to organize themselves for the day ahead.