

The American School in London

Attendance Policy: Middle 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	Middle School Principal
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Approval date	November 2024

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.

ASL believes 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. In addition, 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. Absences also impact teachers who may have to reteach material as well as modify or proctor

assessments. ASL's comprehensive 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, advisory/morning meetings, grade-level gatherings, other events during the school day and school-sponsored trips, which are all integral parts of an ASL education.

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 middle school office, msattendance@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

An excused absence is one for which work missed may be made up. 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

Work missed during excused absences shall be made up in a timely manner, usually within the same number of school days missed plus one, unless special arrangements are made with the teacher(s) before the last day of turning in missed work. Students who miss classes are expected to complete all regular assignments and classwork, as well as any additional work that their teachers regard as appropriate. Students should contact their teacher or check Schoology for missed assignments.

Unexcused absences

An unexcused absence is one for which missed work may not be made up (at the discretion of the School) and includes all absences not defined in excused absences.

The following are examples of unexcused absences:

- staying away from school to do school work
- staying away from school to avoid academic deadlines
- absence for personal or family trips, including extending school holiday breaks
- any absence not approved as an excused absence by the administration

If attendance falls below 85% of school days, or any one class during a semester, parents/guardians are contacted and teachers may give the following report card grade:

- Incomplete: Work needs to be made up before a report card mark can be given. A firm deadline will be given for make-up work.
- Insufficient evidence: The student was not present in class long enough to be assessed and given a final report card mark.

This policy pertains to excused and unexcused absences, with the exception of days missed for school-related reasons.

Students who are not in classes during at least the second half of the school day owing to illness or disciplinary consequences are not allowed to participate in after-school activities, sports, socials or other school events on that day.

All middle school students who are physically able to are required to participate in the ASL physical education (PE) program. Attendance requirements are the same for PE as for academic classes. Absence from PE for up to three class periods owing to a small injury or health issue is possible with a parent/guardian's note. For longer periods, a physician's statement is required. Students who are excused from participating in PE activities for health reasons are expected to attend PE classes, in order to participate in alternative curricular activities. If a student is excused from PE for medical/health reasons, the athletics office will be informed, and that student will not be permitted to participate in athletics practice or game on that same day.

Arrival and departure

Students should be in school by 7:55 am to begin the regularly scheduled day at 8:05 am.

Students may not enter the building before 7:45 am. All students must report to their advisory class no later than 8:05 am. Students arriving after 8:05 am must sign in at the middle school office on arrival. Middle School attendance is taken twice a day; once at the beginning of the morning session, and once at the beginning of the afternoon session.

During regular class hours, students may not leave campus without permission from the middle school office, which may be granted after a written request from a parent/guardian, or on approval of a school-sponsored trip or athletics competition. Students leaving school during regular class hours must be signed out at the middle school office (unless they are part of a school trip or athletics group). The regularly scheduled school day dismissal is 3:05 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; on Wednesdays, dismissal is at 2:10 pm. Grade 5 students must be met by an adult or older sibling if the student is not taking the school bus home.

P rearranged absence

Parents/guardians should email msattendance@asl.org to seek approval for a pre-arranged absence for a student for any reason. As stated earlier, absences such as medical appointments are considered excused, however, absences for holidays or extended travel times may be considered unexcused. The middle school office will respond with a decision of excused or unexcused to requests for any prearranged absences within two school days.

Once a student receives approval, they should pick up the prearranged absence form from the office. The form should be completed at least one week before the anticipated absence in order to allow the student time to take the form around to all of the teachers whose classes will be missed. Once the form is completely filled out, it should be returned to the middle school office. The attendance officer will keep a copy, and hand the original back to the student.

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 msattendance@asl.org to the middle 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.

All students are expected to be on time and in their scheduled classes for the entire class period. Students are not permitted to visit or purchase food from the cafeteria or Booster Club en route to or during their classes. Students are encouraged to be organized and prepared for their upcoming classes to avoid unnecessary trips to their lockers. Any student who is not feeling well should report to the nurse after informing their teacher, the grade-level aide, or the middle school office as appropriate.

In cases of excessive tardiness, the middle school office will take one or more of the following steps:

- Schedule a conference with the student and advisor.
- Make a plan to improve timeliness (lunch or after-school detention)
- Schedule a meeting with administration, the student and parents/guardians to commit to a plan of action
- Implement disciplinary probation for the balance of the semester. Any additional tardies during the probationary period may result in an in-school suspension.