



ATTENDANCE POLICY

January 2017

For students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they meet our minimum expectations on attendance which are:

- To attend the academy regularly
- To be punctual, arriving to the academy and lessons on time
- To have the correct equipment and attitude for learning

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching and learning routines, so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring regular attendance is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from the academy without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents, students and all members of staff. All staff have a clear understanding of the links between good behaviour and attendance and good student progress and attainment.

TO HELP US ALL FOCUS ON THIS WE WILL

- Report to parents regularly on attendance and punctuality
- Celebrate and reward good attendance in a number of ways
- Work and meet with parents to raise attendance levels across the academy
- Support and guide parents with any issues affecting attendance

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half day of absence from the academy has to be classified by the academy (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably provided by telephoning the academy on the first day of absence, or in a note from a parent or carer.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the academy for a reason such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in academy time. Any other unavoidable causes are at the discretion of the academy to authorise in line with government legislation. However, wherever possible, appointments should be made out of academy hours or towards the end of the academy day in order to prevent loss of learning. The academy can and does request medical evidence to support such appointments or absence. Where a student has a medical appointment later in the morning they should still attend the academy for the first lessons of the day.

Unauthorised absences are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes: (Please note this list is not exhaustive)

- Parents/carers keeping children off from the academy unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive in the academy too late to get a mark
- Shopping, birthdays, hair appointments or looking after other children or a family member.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Visits from relatives

Whilst any child may be off from the academy because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the academy. Any problems with irregular attendance are best sorted out between the academy, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend the academy, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, please contact our Attendance Manager or our Education Welfare Officer, who will be pleased to help.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their attendance across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any young person's educational prospects. As an academy we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Absence is monitored thoroughly and parents/carers will be immediately informed of any case seen to have reached the PA mark or seen to be at risk of moving towards that mark. An attendance action plan will be completed for each student.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the academy by 9.00am on the first day of absence and on any subsequent days of absence.
- Send a note in on the first day they return to the academy, with an explanation of the absence. This note must be brought to Student Services, with the child's full name and form on.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text on the first day of absence
- Chase the following day – and then follow up in writing
- Visit your home when absence is an ongoing concern

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/ carers about lots of things, for example if your child is unwell or we need to make contact if your child has an unexplained absence, so we need to have your up to date contact numbers at all times.

Please note no student is sent home unwell without making contact with a parent or carer. We expect all students to be collected by an adult when they are unwell.

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

If we have a concern regarding your child's attendance we will send you a cause for concern letter. If your child's attendance does not improve we will invite you in to discuss the situation. Actions may include an Attendance Plan having to be completed which will then be monitored on a weekly basis. If there is still no improvement in your child's attendance, you will be invited back in for a further meeting. This may include completing a Common Assessment Framework. This may identify a need for further intervention from outside agencies in order to resolve any issues that may be preventing or discouraging your child from attending.

THE LEARNER ENGAGEMENT SERVICE

Parents are expected to contact the academy at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the academy will refer the child to the Learner Engagement Service. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the attendance have failed and unauthorised absence persists, then officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at the academy are available from the academy or the local authority.

ATTENDANCE PANELS

Once a case has been referred to the local authority a School Attendance Panel will be held. This panel will be convened to meet with parents/carers whose child's attendance is causing the academy concern. An Education Welfare Officer will attend as a representative of the local authority along with a senior member of staff. You and your child would be invited to attend the meeting to discuss how to improve your child's attendance and future legal implications.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable.

Students who arrive late also disrupt the learning in lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage future absence.

How we manage lateness:

The academy day starts at **8.20am** and we expect all students to be in class at that time. If a pupil arrives into the academy after **8.25 am** they **must** report to Student Services to sign in.

At **9.00am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if a student arrives after this time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This code is a U. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Students who arrive late to the academy after **8.25 am** will be issued with a one hour same day detention. If the student already has a detention for that particular day, then it will be re-arranged for the next available day.

A student with a persistent late record will be asked to meet with the attendance team. However, you can approach the academy at any time if you are having problems getting your child to the academy on time.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

In line with the government's legislation effective from 1st September 2013 no requests for holidays can be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. For the academy to consider exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence form must be submitted together with any supporting evidence. This should be done at least four weeks before the proposed start of the holiday and before booking the holiday. A meeting or phone call will then take place to discuss the request.

Exceptional circumstances include the following:

- Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specific time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be evidenced by the policy document of the organisation.
- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark on a tour of duty abroad.
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided.

All holidays will be classed as unauthorised, unless you receive confirmation in writing from the academy that the holiday has been authorised. There are no exceptions. All holidays that are unauthorised will be referred to the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. When a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, the penalty is per child, per parent/carer. Failure to pay will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that the parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at the academy. Please note that a separate Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child and all monies are payable to the local authority not the academy.

ACADEMY TARGETS

The academy has targets to improve attendance and you have a vital part to play in meeting these targets. Whilst we strive for every student to achieve 100% attendance, the minimum level of attendance for this academy is 96% attendance. We will keep you updated regularly about how your child's attendance compares to this target.

SUMMARY

The academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. All academy staff are committed to working with parents and students in order to ensure the highest possible level of attendance.

Date of Policy: January 2017.

Date of Policy Review: January 2018