



# Attendance policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	LGB Ratified on 06.12.2019	<b>Date:</b> September 2019
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	September 2019	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	September 2020	

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## 1. Aims

Our academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to academy attendance by:

- Promoting excellent, 100% attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and we will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Good attendance (at least 95.5%) is essential to the learning, achievement and well-being of all learners, and particularly for those learners with SEND and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds, and for those who have had previously disrupted education.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

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

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [academy census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. Academy procedures

### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all academies (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each academy 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Doors open at 8.45am and pupils must arrive in academy by 8.55am on each academy day.

Nursery doors open at 8.30am (register closes at 8.55am) and 12.15pm (register closes at 12.30pm).

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at:

Reception/Year 1: 12.45pm and will be kept open until 1.00pm

Year 2/Year 6: 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm

Year 3 – 5: 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the academy on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible by telephone, email or in person (see also section 6).

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy 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 medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

School should be notified of any appointments in advance, showing evidence of the appointment (e.g. text message, appointment card, hospital letter).

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the academy can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Persistent punctuality issues are dealt with by inviting parents/carers to attend a meeting with school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The academy will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Daily phone calls are made in the event of a child's absence. In the event that contact cannot be made, then all other contacts on the contact form will be phoned. If there is still no contact, a home visit will be made.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents with children with persistent absence will receive letters and be invited to parent and panel meetings. Attendance is discussed at termly Parent Consultations. Parents with children with persistent absence will receive an attendance summary.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

**Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.**

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as those that have a material, compelling and unavoidable impact on the wellbeing of a pupil.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and unavoidable medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3 (an appointment card will be required for 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 academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

**NO holiday leave in term time will be granted.**

**Unauthorised absence will be tackled robustly by the academy in the following ways:**

School identifies pupils with poor attendance and makes regular contact with parents, initially via letter, then phone calls and meetings with the attendance officer and EWO present. These children are then monitored weekly.

### 4.2 Legal sanctions

Academies can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during academy hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

A class's weekly attendance % is displayed on their classroom door. At the end of each term, bronze, silver and gold certificates are given for individual attendance and children with 100% attendance are awarded at

the end of each term. Identified children, who have improved their attendance, also receive an award and a phone call to parents.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the academy by 9.15am in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil is absent without prior notice, parents will be contacted to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer (EWO).

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Trust Board and the Local Governing Body.

The academy will collect and store attendance data via the Management Information System (MIS) Arbor. Data will be analysed, monitored and evaluated to track the attendance patterns of:

- Individual pupils
- Groups of pupils (including boys, girls, SEND, ethnic minority background, age group, those in receipt of additional funding)

These analyses will inform the academy's interventions with pupils and groups of pupils, and parents, to support improved attendance.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The Local Governing Body (LGB)**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy on at least a termly basis. It scrutinizes how effectively this policy is put in place, and reports the impact of the policy to the Board of Trustees.

### **7.2 The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the academy, and for monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the LGB.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The Attendance Lead:**

Monitors attendance data at the academy and at individual pupil, and group level

Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal

Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Provides weekly updates to all staff about the attendance figures for pupils and groups

Provides evaluation of the impact of actions taken to improve attendance

Provides ½ termly up-to-date analysis of attendance trends and patterns for leaders, the LGB, and Education Directors and any external scrutiny

#### **7.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes. All staff are responsible for promoting and encouraging good attendance through their daily interactions with pupils and through the provision of high quality teaching. Form Tutors have a pivotal role in monitoring and improving attendance through their relationships with students, tutoring work, and the robust implementation of rewards systems for good attendance.

#### **7.5 Attendance Lead and Office staff**

The attendance officer and office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the academy system.

#### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Education Directors (overall policy) and Principals (local adjustments for context). At every review, the policy will be shared with the LGB.

#### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on academy attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the academy
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the academy
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	Academy is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at academy after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in academy	Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the academy
<b>#</b>	Planned academy closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day