



## Primary Attendance Policy

Approving Body	Head Teacher
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Legislation	Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 and section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996

# Primary Attendance Policy

## Rationale

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. Poor attendance disadvantages children. Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment and progress of individuals and groups of pupils and the standards thereby achieved by academy.

We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We endeavour to ensure that all children attend the academy regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

## Aims and Objectives

- To continue to raise levels of achievement and participation by maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents/carers of punctuality and attendance issues.
- To identify the causes of non-attendance and act upon them.
- To ensure all staff understand their roles in the monitoring and recording of attendance.
- To maintain and improve attendance throughout the Academy through rewarding and target setting.
- To monitor and evaluate the processes on a regular basis.
- To give clear information on expected levels of attendance.

## Attendance Legislation

*Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have. This can be regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.*

*If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.*

*Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the term after they turn five. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in school year that they reach sixteen.*

*The issue of a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act may be considered in cases where a pupil is absent from one of the academies and the absence is unauthorised.*

## **A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the 1st term after their 5th birthday, so:**

- children who turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st March;
- children who turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st August;
- children who turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st December.

### **Nursery education**

- Should a parent/carer choose to accept a reception place for their 4 year old, we strongly encourage good attendance. This ensures continuity of education and minimises disruption to learning.
- If a child is under five and has been an allocated place in our academy, we expect parents to follow this attendance policy.

### **Reporting Pupil Absence**

All children are likely to be absent or late for school at some time. However, persistent poor attendance and/or punctuality is disruptive to the individual, their peers and their learning and may be an early warning of other difficulties. All planned appointments for children to attend the dentist or doctor should be made outside of the school day.

When a pupil is absent from the academy, parents must notify the academy no later than 9:30am on each day of absence either via telephone, or by leaving a message on the voice message service if the academy provides one. Failure to report absence will be followed up by the academy or the Trust Attendance Officer.

The reported absence message may be an answering phone service and as such a message can be left at any time. If a message is left it should include in order:

- Pupil's name
- Reason for absence
- Anticipated return date

Parents must call the academy each day during the child's absence period.

This should be followed up in all cases with a note to the Attendance Administrator or Teacher stipulating the reason for absence.

### **First Day Call**

All academies operate a "first day call" system. This will mean that all parents/carers can expect to be contacted on the first day of any absence if the academy has not been previously informed, via telephone, text message or email. If contact cannot be made during this day a letter will be sent home. A satisfactory reply to the letter will authorise this absence; otherwise it will remain as unauthorised.

Where contact has been attempted but no reply is received and absence continues, further action will be taken, including:

- Informing key staff

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- A home visit
- Following of the Early Intervention Policy

## **Holidays**

We actively discourage any parent/carer taking children out of school during term-time for family holidays because of the disruption that it causes to the education of individual pupils and class groups.

All parents must complete a leave of absence form, however none of the academies authorise holidays, in line with the Government's policies. Holidays during term time are marked as G. Exceptional circumstances may be authorised at the discretion of the senior leader at each academy. However, even then we would take into consideration what year group the pupil is and whether any exams or assessments are taking place at the requested time of absence.

## **Punctuality**

A member of the academy staff and/or the Trust Attendance Officer operates late gate checks throughout the year without notice. This is at the academy's discretion. Persistent punctuality issues will result in a meeting being held in the academy to discuss a way forward to improve the child's punctuality with a member of academy staff or the Trust Attendance Officer.

Pupils arriving after the close of registers will be marked accordingly.

## **Early Intervention Policy**

Pupils who have failed to attend school for 10 days will be dealt with according to an agreed protocol with the Children Missing Education Officer.

1. The Academy or the Trust Attendance Officer will contact the Children Missing Education Officer with the pupil details, nature of the problem and evidence of school contact.
2. If a child has a continued period of unexplained absence the academy will complete a home visit within 10 days. If the matter remains unresolved at this point the academy will contact the local authority children missing education team.
3. For a pupil who is subject to a child protection plan the academy will notify children's social care if there is an unexplained absence of up to 3 days and undertake a home visit within this time
4. The pupils will be reported as "child missing from education" and further welfare services will become involved.

This process will begin automatically once a pupil reaches the 10th day, but may start earlier at the discretion of the Headteacher in conjunction with the Attendance Officer.

## **Ongoing Monitoring**

- Monitoring pupils with Pastoral staff.
- Using data to monitor Pupil Premium, Free School Meals, Looked After, SEND and Persistent Absence groups etc.

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- Weekly meetings take place involving the Trust Attendance Officer, and key staff in the academy.
- The Director of Primary Education, Primary Operations Lead and the Attendance Officers will meet at least once per half term to discuss academy attendance issues.
- Throughout this process, accurate records need to be kept.

## **Electronic Registration**

All staff will use electronic registration to register their class. Where this is not possible, the member of staff affected must inform the Attendance Administrator immediately and take a paper register of the group – this can be obtained from the school office in an emergency.

## **Persistent Absence**

When a pupil is identified as a potential persistent absentee the Attendance Office/Manager will follow the following procedure:

1. When a pupil is identified as having 90-92% attendance, initial contact will be made by the Attendance Manager/Officer with the parent/carer. Targets will be set to improve attendance.
2. The pupil's attendance will be monitored closely, but if no improvements are made and attendance continues to drop then other forms of action will be taken.

In cases of persistent absence (deemed as that below 90%) the following procedure will be followed:

1. When a pupil is identified as having below 90% attendance (Persistent Absentee) a letter will be sent out to the parent/carer by the Attendance Officer. This is to highlight the situation and parents will be invited into the academy to discuss the matter.
2. If a pupil's attendance rate does not improve and a pupil is identified as a Persistent Absence (PA), a second contact letter will be sent by the Attendance Officer to the parent/carer. This will ascertain the nature of any issues of which we ought to be aware and necessary support implemented as required. Targets will be set to improve attendance.

Where pupils are meeting or exceeding their target we will make every effort to recognise and reward improvements in attendance.

## **Medical Appointments**

Parents/carers are requested to make routine medical appointments in school holidays or after school. If this is not possible, appointments should be made at the start or near the end of the academy day. If an appointment were made for the afternoon, then your child would be expected to attend the academy in the morning (unless due to the nature of the appointment this is not possible). If the appointment were made for the morning, then your child would be expected to be returned to the academy after the appointment. It is not necessary to have a whole day off the academy for a routine medical appointment. Medical appointments will only be

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authorised upon receipt of a written appointment card or letter, please show this when you come to collect your child. Failure to produce evidence of a medical appointment will result in the absence being marked down as unauthorised.

## **Signing In and Out**

Pupils with appointments must show an appointment card or note from home to their teacher or school reception. Parents will collect their child from the main reception in school where they will sign out. Marks will be entered for the pupil for the remainder of the session where appropriate.

Parents with pupils who arrive late to school for any reason will sign in at the main reception. Their register mark will be entered along with the number of minutes late and, where appropriate, the reason for lateness.

## **Reward Strategies**

There are a number of rewards put in place to positively encourage outstanding attendance. These will be unique to each academy.

## **Family Services**

The Family Services work to raise achievement levels by working with pupils, parents and schools, other agencies and the community, to improve the attendance of pupils. They also work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## **What happens if my child does not attend school regularly?**

Your child's academy is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LA. Most local authorities employ Enforcement Officers to monitor school attendance and to help parents meet their responsibility. If your child is not attending school regularly, a Family Support Worker may visit or write to you.

Enforcement Officers work with parents to address their child's attendance difficulties. You may be offered a parenting contract by your child's school or Family Services. This is a formal agreement between the school and Family Services to provide you with support and make an agreement to put in place strategies to help improve your child's attendance.

**As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being taken to court.**

## **Requests for Elective Home Education (EHE)**

The academy believes that the best education for all pupils is that provided by the academy and in the academy. If a parent contacts the academy stating that they wish to remove their child from the academy in order to facilitate EHE, then the academy will take the following steps:

1. Facilitate a face to face meeting with the parent making the request, failing this a phone call as a minimum from which notes are taken and copies provided to the parent
2. The Academy will state that they do not believe that this request is in the best interests of the pupils
3. Endeavour to persuade the parent to change their mind
4. Use the standard Local Authority paperwork to be sent to the EHE team, clearly highlighting any safeguarding concerns and notifying the LA that the academy does not believe that this request is in the best interests of the pupil
5. The pupil remains on the academy roll and is expected to attend the academy at all times until the LA confirms they have undertaken their own checks and approved the EHE request
6. That if a pupil leaves the academy roll for approved EHE, a letter is sent to the parent confirming this choice and re-enforcing the academy view that this change is not in the best interests of the pupil and the date on which the roll change was made

<b>Staged Approach To the Management of Attendance</b>		
<b>Whole school attendance</b>		
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Attendance falls below the Trust Attendance target &amp; the pupil's attendance is a concern</b>	<p>Letter 1 will be sent to the parents/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressing concerns about attendance in the academy.</li> <li>• Informing the parent/carers of current attendance level.</li> <li>• Reminding parents/carers of their legal responsibility &amp; the nature of "persistent absence".</li> <li>• Welcoming the parents/carers to arrange contact with the academy if they wish to discuss attendance further.</li> <li>• Attendance is monitored.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Parents have received a letter 1 &amp; attendance remains a concern</b>	<p>Letter 2 will be sent to parents/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing parents/carers of on-going concern about their child's attendance.</li> <li>• The academy invites parents/carers into school to meet with the Trust Attendance Officer.</li> <li>• Reminding parents/carers of their legal responsibility &amp; the nature of "persistent absence".</li> <li>• Formally notifying parents/carers that their child's attendance is being monitored for a period of time.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Parents have received a letter 1 &amp; 2 &amp; attendance continues to be cause for concern</b>	<p>Letter 3 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifying the parents/carers that the academy intends to take further action.</li> <li>• Headteacher/Attendance Officer authorises letter to parents/carers and referral to Family Support Services at the Local Authority.</li> </ul>
	<b>During the monitoring period</b>	<p>A letter of Praise will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform parents/carers of the positive measures being taken to help improve their child's attendance.</li> <li>• Notifying the parents/carers that the academy will continue to monitor attendance to ensure sustained improvement.</li> </ul>