



Academy @ Worden

Attendance Policy 2016-17

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Rationale

The Academy is committed to raising achievement levels in and out of the classroom. We want to provide students with the opportunity to maximise their talents and abilities. Students need to attend regularly and be punctual if they are to fulfil such an aspiration. The Academy recognises that students cannot achieve the highest standards of which they are capable if they are not in lessons and students, parents, carers and staff all have a part to play in improving school attendance and punctuality. The Academy's Attendance Target is set at 98%.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines which may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance of at least 98% at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

It is very important that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Purposes

- To make students, staff, parents, carers and governors aware of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality
- To develop a partnership between parents and school so that each are aware of their responsibilities
- To increase percentage attendance for all and reduce amount of unauthorised absence
- To liaise closely with the school attendance officer
- To identify at the earliest possible stage those students whose attendance/punctuality to lessons is a problem and act accordingly
- To make everyone aware of the different categories of absence
- To reward those students who attend school on a regular basis and are punctual to lessons

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either Authorised or Unauthorised.

Authorised absences are a missed session from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. It is the decision of the school, not the parents, regarding the authorisation of absence. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- non agreement with a school sanction i.e. isolation
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping, birthdays or looking after other children
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Absence procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or you can call into school and report to reception

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone/text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you that day and will also send a letter home enquiring about the absence
- invite you into school to discuss the situation with our pastoral team if the absences persist

Student absences

- From September 2013 school will actively seek support and guidance from the LA with regard to unauthorised absences and legal intervention. This will take the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). This can be requested from the LA for any student who has 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences in any term or 14 sessions (7 days) of unauthorised absences over two consecutive terms. This also applies to unauthorised holidays.
- All students whose attendance falls below 96% will be asked to provide medical evidence for any absences. School will contact parents via a letter to highlight school's concern. As part of the school's monitoring of attendance and unauthorised absences the school reserves the right to mark as unauthorised any absence that is not evidenced
- The School Attendance Officer will liaise with the Assistant Headteacher to discuss student absences on a weekly basis. Any student whose attendance falls below 95% or is persistently absent without a valid reason or medical note will be given targets to achieve. If these targets are not met parents or carers could eventually face a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) being issued by the Local Authority
- On the absence report, the School Attendance Officer will only categorise an absence when they have the necessary evidence such as a parental note to cover a medical absence, a school letter confirming an authorised holiday, a parental telephone call confirming an absence etc. Unexplained absences will then show up on the next absence report and followed up by the School Attendance Officer
- Absence notes, if handed to the student's Form Tutor must be dated and signed by the student's Form Tutor. They will usually be handed in at the school office and passed to the School Attendance Officer who will store them
- Form Tutors must contact one of the school's Child Protection Officers regarding any absence of students classed as 'high risk' so that they can co-ordinate any investigation.

Student lateness

- Students' lateness to registration is recorded on PARS
- Any student arriving to school after 8.40am (or 1.20pm should they have been out of school for any reason) must sign the late book at the school's general office. Students will receive a C4 detention for being late. An SLT detention will be awarded for students who are late three times in one week
- It is the tutors' responsibility to deal with student lateness to registration with an appropriate sanction (C3) but the school office will deal with those students with persistent lateness by issuing a C4
- Students must be punctual to all lessons. Any lateness will be recorded on PARS and appropriate action (C3) taken by the class teacher for more than 3 minutes late to lesson. Repeated lateness to lessons will result in a C4.

- On some occasions, senior staff will make spot checks regarding student lateness and its follow up
- Late (before register closed) - that is morning lateness BEFORE 9.05am or afternoon lateness BEFORE 1.45 pm (This is classed in the statistics as a late)
- Late (after official closure of register) - that is morning lateness AFTER 9.10am and afternoon lateness AFTER 1.50pm (This is classed as an UNAUTHORISED absence)
- Any student found to be truanting lessons/school will receive a C5 isolation on the following day that they return to school.

Registers-PARS

- This is an electronic register, one for each tutor group. The Form Tutor is responsible for marking the AM PARS register correctly at 8.40am
- The class teacher for lesson five is responsible for marking the PM PARS register correctly at 1.20pm
- A paper register, in its plastic cover, must be returned to the office immediately after or by the end of morning registration (8.45am) and immediately after or by the end of afternoon registration (1.20pm), even if there is a NIL report on an unknown absence, (if for any reason PARS cannot be used)

Leave of absence in term time

Taking leave/holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school time to go on holiday. No holidays will be authorised in term time unless deemed as exceptional circumstances by the Head Teacher. *(you will be asked to provide medical evidence for absences lasting 5 days or more, failure to do so will result in school applying for a FPN as we will presume you have taken a holiday)*

Through the home-school partnership agreement, school website, the prospectus, letters home, the students' planner and parents/carers meetings the school makes it clear that it actively discourages the taking of holidays in term time as this is detrimental to the continuity of the child's education.

All applications for leave must be made at least 3 weeks in advanced using the 'Application for leave of absence form' available from the school office or school website. The new amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, make clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

In making the decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave, and a percentage attendance of over 98% and the length of leave requested.

Religious absence:

The school will authorise one day 'leave' per religious festival but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.

Use of legal Interventions:

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at school which they are registered. Penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Section 36 of the Children Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

Legal action in the courts may be used as a strategy to improve attendance when parents have failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Penalty Notices are a further option available to the Local Authority.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

From September 2013 school will actively seek support and guidance from the LA with regard to unauthorised absences and legal intervention. This will take the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). This can be requested from the LA for any student who has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences in any term or 14 sessions of unauthorised absences over two consecutive terms. This also applies to unauthorised holidays.

If holidays are taken without prior notice then a Fixed Penalty Notice will be applied for which could result in a £120 fine per parent, per child. Payment of a Penalty within 21 days of receipt of the Notice is £60. Payment after this time, but within 28 days of receipt of the notice is £120.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued include:

- Parentally condoned absence;
- Unauthorised holidays in term time
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed

Non payment of the Penalty Notice within the 28 days time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Roles and responsibilities for attendance

Parents:

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
- Contact school on the first day of absence
- Avoid holidays in term time and apply at least three weeks in advanced using the correct leave of absence form
- Attend and support school intervention offered, such as meetings, attendance support plans, Common Assessment Frameworks etc

Students:

- Attend school regularly and registration punctually
- Students are to be involved in monitoring their own attendance in their planners
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on attendance
- Co operate and participate in support and intervention offered by school

Form Tutors:

- To arrive at the appropriate tutor room promptly for registration as, apart from in exceptional circumstances, this is their first priority at 8.40am. They must also arrive promptly at 1.05pm to their tutor room or hall for learning quarter or assembly.
- Register classes every morning. It is essential that this task is completed correctly and accurately as it is a legal requirement and may be used in a court of law as evidence to prosecute parents/carers. All registers must be completed by the Form Tutor and in no circumstances by the students or any visitor
- Form Tutors should be aware of any patterns that exist for student lateness or absence and report these to the School Attendance Officer
- Form Tutors who receive notification concerning a period of absence must hand this to the School Attendance Officer who will store the note in the office. If you are in doubt about the validity of a note, check with the Progress Manager. Only the school can approve absence, not parents. Any requests must be made in writing to the Head teacher
- Attendance percentage will be included on student reports
- When a Form Tutor is absent from school a member of staff, permanent or temporary, will be assigned to the tutor group and must follow the school's procedures

Progress Manager:

- The Progress Manager will check attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis for their year groups and then liaise with the School Attendance Officer and/or the Assistant Head Teacher with regards to any issues with students.
- Recognition and support will be given to students experiencing difficulties with attendance. This is a key role for all staff, especially Form Tutors, Progress Managers and Assistant Head Teacher.
- Percentage attendance figures will be included on the weekly bulletin. They will also be mentioned in assemblies and referred to at governors' meetings.
- The Progress Manager will meet with parents/carers and students to discuss student absence/poor attendance and/or lateness.
- The Progress Managers will arrange Tier 1 attendance panels whenever necessary and arrange for parents/carers and students to attend these meetings. The Attendance Officer will draw up the appropriate documentation and have this ready for the meetings.

School Attendance Officer:

- First day response: contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided
- Email pupil absence each day to progress managers who will follow up with home during the day.
- Input and monitor the attendance registers in line with statutory guidance
- Regularly communicate student attendance to parents
- Provide appropriate data to staff as directed by school attendance lead
- Provide letters and certificates as appropriate
- Liaise with external agencies such as CME and EHE (Children Missing in Education and Elective Home Education)
- The School Attendance Officer on a weekly basis will discuss student absences and lateness. Any concerns will be discussed with the Progress Manager as appropriate and/or the Assistant head teacher

Assistant Head teacher:

- The Assistant Head teacher will set targets for students who are persistently absent with no valid reason and/or who are persistently late
- The Assistant Head teacher will arrange Tier 2 attendance panels whenever necessary and arrange for parents/carers and students to attend these meetings. The Attendance Officer will draw up the appropriate documentation and have this ready for the meetings.
- The Assistant Head teacher will link and liaise with outside agencies as and when appropriate
- The Assistant Head teacher will arrange home visits where there are difficulties with attendance, truancy and/or lateness
- The Assistant Head teacher will liaise with the Head teacher and local authority with regards the issuing of fixed penalty notices if a student's attendance/punctuality fails to improve after intervention strategies are put in place.

All school staff:

- Will give priority to teaching their lessons on time thus setting a good example to students.
- Will dismiss students promptly at the end of the lesson and not before the bell. This is so they can reach their next lesson on time
- Must keep a register of all their own lessons on PARS and complete them in the first 10 minutes of the lesson
- Will monitor attendance patterns, especially at key times and liaise with Form Tutors and the School Attendance Officer
- Will only allow a student out of a lesson if absolutely necessary. If a student needs to leave a lesson they should be issued with a note/corridor pass.
- Will provide a welcoming atmosphere for students to ensure that students are punctual to all lessons. Any lateness will be recorded on PARS and appropriate action taken (C3). It is the responsibility of subject teachers to deal satisfactorily with student lateness which has no good reason. If the subject teacher feels that his/her sanctions are having little or no affect then the help of the Head of Faculty should be sought until the problem is effectively resolved.

Action on poor attendance

(Poor attendance can be identified in a number of ways such as persistent absence which is deemed as 91% or less or more than 3 sessions of absence in a half term)

- Liaison by Head teacher, Assistant Head teacher and Progress Manager to identify attendance issues

- Weekly meetings of Assistant Head teacher and Progress Manager to discuss action on attendance issues/student absences
- Telephone calls to parents and home visits will be carried out by the School Attendance Officer as appropriate
- Meetings will be arranged in school with students and parents to discuss student absences/poor attendance to discuss possible action/strategies
- Targets will be set for students who are persistently absent with no valid reason
- Attendance panels will be arranged to include members of the Governing Body Pastoral Committee to discuss targets for individual students. Parents will also be asked to attend
- A CAF to be completed if appropriate for attendance issues
- Links established with outside agencies if appropriate
- Fixed Penalty Notices issued by the Local Authority if a student's attendance fails to improve after intervention strategies are put in place.

Rewards for good attendance and punctuality

It is important to identify and reward good attendance and punctuality. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- promote a culture, across school, which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- update you on attendance in our newsletter
- give students a bonus of 5 merits for every full week they are in school
- report to you termly on how your child is performing in school giving you an attendance update
- reward students with an improved attendance and/or punctuality record
- award certificates for students at the end of a term for 100% attendance during presentation assemblies
- display year attendance in the weekly school bulletin
- present a trophy to the school house whose attendance and/or punctuality have been the best over the year
- present Gold Awards for students with 5 years full attendance

Attendance percentages are defined as the following:

100% - Outstanding

99% - Excellent

98% - Good

96-97% - Satisfactory

94-95% - Needs Improving

Less than 93% - Cause for Concern

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All staff are committed to working with parents and students, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.