

Attendance Policy

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# 1. Aims

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

* Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
* Ensuring every pupil has access to bespoke timetable appropriate to their needs
* 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 the agreed timetable and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons and sessions.

Attendance is vital for progress as many pupils who attend our academy have had large gaps in their learning, low attendance in previous educational settings and have become disengaged in education. Positive attendance will enable pupils to take full advantage of our education offer and result in positive outcomes.

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

* [The Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II)
* [The Education Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/part/3/chapter/3)
* [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/7/chapter/2/crossheading/school-attendance)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/amendment-regulation-2010_tcm3-8642.pdf)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/made)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016](http://legislation.data.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/made/data.html)
* [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/pdfs/uksiem_20130756_en.pdf)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las), 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 schools and 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 completed twice daily. We have wide registration periods due to our bespoke timetables and varied start and finish times per pupil. Our academy registration periods are open from 8.40am- 12pm and 12pm – 3.30pm. It will mark whether every pupil is:

* Present - /
* Attending an approved off-site educational activity - B
* Absent – (authorised C or non- authorised - O)
* Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – Y
* Work experience – W
* Registers will be completed within 30 minutes of the start of a pupil’s timetable.

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.

**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 – as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents can notify the site by phoning in the absence and informing a member of the staff team. Some parents may choose to communicate via email or text message.

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**

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Appointments will be authorised as medical.

Parents can notify the academy via contacting the site office or sending in a letter with their child to be handed in to a staff member.

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

**3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

If pupils who travel by commissioned taxi arrive late, this is not the pupil’s fault and this will not be to their detriment. They will not be marked as late as punctuality is not the pupil’s concern. We will however address this with the transport company.

For pupils who arrive after their allocated tutor time, and who make their own way to the academy, they will be marked as late.

Our academy utilises various timetables to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils receive bespoke timetables with various start and finish times. A pupil’s attendance will be recorded in accordance with their agreed timetable.

**3.5 Following up absence**

The academy will follow up any absences on the same day to ascertain the reason for absence with an appropriate adult and ensure effective and swift safeguarding action is taken where necessary. We will identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. First day absence contact can be made via our MIS texting service to parents which alerts them and requests they contact us to provide the reason for absence.

**3.6 Reporting to parents**

Attendance reports are formally provided to parents 3 times per year via a learning plan review in their child’s Induvial Leaning Plan (ILP). However, if a pupil’s attendance is reducing then parents will be informed accordingly in an attempt to support an increase in attendance. We analyse attendance patterns per pupil half termly as a minimum, and so 6 times per year. Parents will be issued with intervention letters depending on their child’s attendance. They are reminded of their legal responsibilities as a parent to ensure their child engages in education. Parents may also be issued with positive progress letters where improvements have been made.

# 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence including holidays

**4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

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

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

* If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
* Where an absence from the academy is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
* The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Head Teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
* Out of academy programs such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
* To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative, if the Head Teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Head Teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Head Teacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Head Teacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Evidence would be required in each case.

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 Headteacher’s discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

* Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
* 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

**4.2 Holidays in term time**

Term-time holidays will NOT be approved at any time. If a family wish to go on holiday during school time, this will not be approved by the Head Teacher and the child will receive an unauthorised absence code.

If a family go on holiday during term time without informing the Head Teacher in advance, then the Head Teacher can issue an instant penalty with the Local Authority. Both parents will be fined for all children who were absent from school.

However, if the family complete the holiday request form and provide this to the Head Teacher prior to the holiday, then the Head Teacher can use their discretion about whether to issue a fine to parents. See appendix 4. Parents can request a paper copy of this by contacting the site office or by downloading this policy from our academy website.

Academy procedures when targeting unauthorised absence are as follows:

1. If pupil attendance decreases below 90% and direct communication with parents / carers has not had the desired effect of increasing their child’s attendance. A stage 1 letter will be issued highlighting the decrease in attendance, this will be monitored closely over the half-term. The academy will attempt to provide supportive strategies to support pupil attendance.
2. If attendance stays below 90%, but progress has been made, parents / carers will be informed stating the positive percentage improvement in attendance. Parents / carers will be reminded that their child is still below 90% and that their attendance will continue to be monitored.
3. If attendance stays below 90% and no improvement has been made, a stage 2 letter will be sent to parents / carers explaining that the academy has significant concerns regarding their child’s attendance. Parents / carers will also be invited into an attendance meeting with an appropriate member of academy staff. The aim of this meeting will be to discuss the rationale for their child not attending school, and any strategies to support increasing attendance or attending identified timetables. Strategies may include referral to the Trusts Family and Student Support Team (FASST), change in curriculum offer, alternative provision, work experience, change of timetable, change of form, meet and greet on arrival.
4. If there is no improvement in attendance after letter 1 and 2 and the face-to-face meeting, then a stage 3 formal letter will be issued. Monitor any improvement within a specified period of 3 to 6 weeks. If attendance does not improve over that set period, then the academy will be required to follow Derbyshire County Council’s (DCC), legal processes and refer to Derbyshire Education Welfare service for appropriate action which may involve fine(s) or prosecution.
* Study leave will not be granted in our academy. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise on site.

**4.2 Legal sanctions**

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

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must each 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 Head Teacher, following the local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

* The 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 school 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

Our academy will reward positive attendance with certifications, rewards e.g. trips and gift cards. Attendance contributes to our half termly whole academy rewards policy.

Our aim is to work with parents and carers to support pupils to make the right choice regarding attendance. Timetables are bespoke and can be flexible to suit the needs of the pupil to support engagement and attendance. Parents/carers and pupils will receive regular feedback regarding improvements in attendance.

# 6. Attendance monitoring

The pastoral team monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis. The Assistant Head Teacher for Behaviour and Attitudes monitors overall academy trends, systems and procedures.

Parents are expected to call the academy if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the academy each day a child is ill.

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 (PA).

Pupil-level absence data is collected each half term and published to governors. We compare our academy attendance to national AP and PRU data and to the context of our average incoming attendance to measure progress from starting points.

In our academy, attendance data is stored via our management information system (MIS). This data is used to inform staff, parents/carers and pupils what their attendance is. Internal data is used to identify whether or not there are particular pupils or groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. We will continue to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support. Internal data is also used to inform the academy’s local governing body via the Head Teachers report.

# 7. Roles and responsibilities

**7.1 The Governing Board**

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy on at least a half termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

**7.2 The Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented, consistently across the academy. They will continue to monitor academy-level absence data and report it to the governors.

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

**7.3 The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Behaviour and Attitudes**

* Holds all academy colleagues accountable for following this attendance policy
* Has over- sight of whole academy trends, data, progress and National comparisons
* Meets weekly with the pastoral team
* Develops new initiates where required to improve attendance

**7.4 The Site Leads**

* Monitor attendance data at their site and individual pupils
* Report concerns about attendance to the pastoral team
* Hold other academy colleagues accountable for following this attendance policy
* Work with pastoral officers to tackle persistent absence
* Ensure that parents are made aware of their legal responsibilities at induction
* Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
* Attend weekly attendance meetings to discuss persistent absentees, attendance concerns and safeguarding issues linked to attendance. All meetings are minuted.
* Carry out safe and well visits if required.

**7.5 Pastoral Officers**

* Liaise with the site leads and form tutors to express concerns about pupil absence
* Meet with SLT weekly to be proactive and identify pupil attendance concerns
* Hold other academy colleagues accountable for following this attendance policy
* Carry out safe and well visits

**7.6 Class teachers/SLTA’s**

* Class teachers and STLAs are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via the site agreement.
* Communicate with pupils in their form to praise pupils where attendance has improved
* Communicate with parents where attendance is a concern
* Liaise with the pastoral team and site lead to express concerns about absence
* Carry out safe and well visits where appropriate and agreed

**7.7 Business Service Assistants (BSAs)**

BSAs are expected to:

* Take calls from parents about absence and record this communication
* Input attendance codes onto the MIS
* Ensure that daily registers are completed
* Make first contact should a pupil be absent

**7.8 Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

* Make sure their child attends every session on time
* Contact the academy to report their child’s absence on the first day and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
* Work with the academy to improve their child’s attendance
* Provide the academy with more than one emergency contact number for their child
* Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day
* Take holidays in the school holidays and not in term time

# 8. Monitoring arrangements

* This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by a member of the SLT and agreed by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

**9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to:

* Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
* Pupil Wellbeing policy
* Rewards policy
* DCC Child Missing Education policy

# Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school 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 school |
| **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 school |
| **V** | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| **W** | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **Authorised absence** |
| **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 | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | 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) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

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

Appendix 2

Parents remain in contact and genuine reason for absence – Maintain phone contact and issue home working if suitable option

No contact with parent/career or no genuine reason given after 4 days – home visit initiated

Referral to Police on 101 if Starting Point advise

Pupil does not return to site and no contact for 10 school days (2 weeks)

Pupil physically seen. Reinforce importance of contact to parent, and decide if absence reason is genuine. Remind parent of legal duty to send their child to school.

Home visit by school staff

Day 4 still no contact

Call day 2 and 3 of absence

No contact with home

Parent contactable via phone and genuine reason for absence, yet still absent after day 4

Pupil returns to site within 3 days – no further action

Reinforce need for “safe and well check” to physically see the pupil is well. Agree another time later, or next day, to see pupil. Reinforce legal duty regarding attendance

Pupil not seen at home – leave a “Home Visit “Letter to evidence contact

Pupil still absent and not seen and no genuine reason for absence – “Unauthorised”

Parent at home, but pupil not present

Pupil seen and returns to school

Referral to Starting Point. Issue parents with concern letter about welfare of the pupil to inform parents you are contacting social care and/or police. Letter A

Continue to make phone calls, text, e-mails and further home visits for a further week or until seen

If attendance falls below 90%, then follow the declining attendance flowchart

Pupil returns to school – no further action

Maintain contact. Contact Child Missing Education team at DCC if not physically seen for 28 days.

First day of absence phone call to parents

Maintain contact with external agencies where possible, offer support, interventions, timetable changes or make agency referrals if required. If attendance is now below 90%, then begin the pupil attendance record to gather evidence of our supportive interventions for if a fixed penalty notice is requested from the Education Welfare Service

Appendix 3



Appendix 4

**HOLIDAY REQUEST FORM**

PLEASE NOTE - The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** state that Headteacher’s should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Child(ren) …………………………………………… Year Group ………………..

 …………………………………………………………. Year Group ………………..

 .…………………………………………………………. Year Group ………………

Childs Address ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Name of Applicant(s) and Address (if different)…………………………………..………………………………

 …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

**I / We wish to apply for our child(ren) to be absent from school for EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES on the following dates.**

From…………………………………………………….. To…………………………………………………….

Total number of days our child(ren) will be absent from school ……………..

|  |
| --- |
| Please supply in as much detail as possible the reason for your request and why you feel it is **exceptional circumstances**. Please include the names of the adult(s) who will be with your child(ren) during their absence from school.  Continue over the page if necessary |

Signed (both parents/carers if applicable) Date …………………………………

**………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………….**

***IF THE REQUEST FOR A FAMILY HOLIDAY IS NOT SUBMITTED BEFORE THE ABSENCE, THEN AN INSTANT FINE WILL BE ISSUED BY THE ACADEMY.***