

	Attendance & Punctuality Policy	Author:	James Done
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AIMS

Regular attendance is essential if a student is to have a successful education. Poor attendance and truanting can also endanger a student's general personal development and future career prospects. This policy aims to:

- To encourage students to aim for 100% attendance.
- To reduce persistent absenteeism, which is defined as attendance under 90%.
- To establish effective monitoring of attendance, persistent absenteeism and punctuality (the punctuality monitoring procedures are part of this document).
- To ensure there is a whole Academy approach which addresses the causes of poor attendance and punctuality, provides appropriate follow up action and support, and which involves the whole Academy community. (Attendance Officer, Heads of Year, Leadership Team, HLTA responsible for attendance, Pupil Premium Attendance Co-ordinator, Students, Parents/Carers, internal administration, external agencies, e.g. the MAT team, and the Governing Body).
- To keep accurate registers according to the agreed regulations using SIMS.
- To reduce to an absolute minimum leave of absence requests.
- To confer rewards for good attendance and punctuality, especially students with 100% attendance, and to promote its benefits throughout the Academy and local community.
- To ensure Local Authority guidance is followed for authorisation of holidays in term time.

It is intended that through this policy, awareness of good attendance will be raised and a coherent and consistent approach to promoting and securing good attendance will be established across the Academy. The outcome of this should be to work towards the whole Academy attendance target of 97%.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and carers

- Only with the full support of parents/carers can full attendance be guaranteed: parents or carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend the Academy regularly and may risk prosecution if they fail in this duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Parents/carers should also ensure that their children arrive at Academy on time, with the right equipment, properly attired in uniform and in the right emotional condition to learn and accept the Academy's policies.
- It is parents'/carers' responsibility to inform the Academy of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence and to provide such further information as is required.
- Parents/carers should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy, published on the website, and work closely with Academy staff and other agencies to overcome any obstacles to good attendance.

The Form Tutor will:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to form time, give a high profile to attendance and punctuality and praise students who arrive on time.
- Carry out registration in the prescribed manner.
- Check absences on SIMS and help to ensure that absence is followed up.
- Discuss attendance with the form on a weekly basis.
- Look for patterns of punctuality and absence, reporting concerns to the Head of Year/Attendance Team.
- Remind students about the automatic Vivo rewards for full attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis.
- Build a welcoming atmosphere in the tutor group and provide support as necessary when students return after an absence.

- Ring the parents/carers after 3 days of absence. This should be in all cases, regardless of the student's prior attendance. Although absence may have been explained, the call can be used to check on the student's progress, if any work is required and expected date of return.
- Conduct 'return to studies' interviews.
- Use the register to give students more information on their attendance every half term, discussing any concerns they may have.

Form Tutors will keep in their attendance folders:

- Weekly attendance data from the attendance officer.
- Record of attendance conversations when students return to studies or when phone calls are made to parents or carers.
- Termly and half termly monitoring information for their form group.
- Attendance league details.
- Tutors will need to show this folder to Heads of Year, Leadership or the Attendance team for quality assurance purposes.

The subject teacher will:

- Provide a good example by arriving on time to lessons welcoming students with a 'meet and greet' positive approach.
- Carry out a register of the class at the beginning of period 5 as the afternoon registration, and as soon as possible for all other lessons (within the first 10 minutes) so that punctuality is promoted and late students are recorded, together with the number of minutes late.
- Provide relevant, appropriately challenging learning opportunities to engage students in learning, thus promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide relevant work for students to do if they have returned following an absence.
- Be supportive of students when they have been absent in providing them with strategies to catch up any missed work.

Heads of Year and Family Support Workers will:

- Monitor the attendance of all students within their year group, directing form tutor support and taking responsibility for those causing concern.
- Liaise with the Attendance Team to seek support with students causing concern with attendance.
- Attend weekly meetings with the attendance team to discuss impact of intervention strategies and discuss causes of concern.
- Regularly promote the importance of attendance via form time and assemblies.
- Conduct a wide range of intervention strategies including attendance conversations, attendance panels, phone calls home and home visits to improve student attendance.
- Ensure attendance is a standing item on all tutor team meeting agendas.

The Attendance Officer will:

- Ensure that parents of absent students are texted before 09.30 am where notification of absence has not been received.
- Begin to make calls home where no explanation has been received from 10.00am onwards and then on each subsequent day where there has been no contact. A home visit will be made within 5 working days where no contact has been made. The purpose of these calls is to:
 - ascertain the reason for absence
 - demonstrate to parents/carers that we are committed to ensuring good attendance
 - provide accurate coding on SIMS
- Notify the home of lateness via text message.
- Produce attendance data for Leadership Team, Heads of Year and form tutors.
- Have regular meetings with those with responsibility for attendance (This will include the leadership team link and Pupil Premium attendance co-ordinator).

- Track unauthorised leaves of absence and issue warning or fixed penalty fines as agreed with the Leadership team link and or the Attendance Team.
- Enter all known absences for trips, visits, work experience and exam times.
- Record all explanations of absences and lateness.
- Help identify and prepare cases for action when there are unauthorised holidays in term time.

HLTA responsible for attendance will:

- Work alongside Attendance Officer, Family Support Workers and the Pupil Premium Attendance Co-ordinator to monitor and support students who attendance is low.
- Update and maintain records on SIMS.
- Monitor those students provided with a 'B' code and provide access to education for such students.
- Conduct home visits and offsite provision support.
- Send letters home, attend weekly meetings and complete TAG meetings with students
- Support the Attendance Panel process.
- Build effective working relationships with vulnerable students and parents/carers.
- Provide rewards where appropriate.
- Support Heads of Year with identified cases and liaise with other professionals and agencies on their behalf.
- Develop strategies and initiatives where appropriate.

The Pupil Premium Attendance Co-ordinator, will:

- Monitor attendance and set targets in conjunction with MAT teams through targeted attendance groups for students below 90%.
- Share attendance information with form tutors and Heads of Year.
- Share information at regular timetabled meetings with the MAT team.
- Liaise with the Assistant Principal, and heads of year where attendance is a specific and serious problem.
- Identify students for Leadership Team and Heads of Year to mentor and to liaise with parents on promoting good attendance.
- Arrange and lead attendance panels and home visits for students whose attendance is causing concern.
- Use the Academy's intervention process before referrals are made to MAT teams and Derbyshire County Council.
- Provide evidence for the fast track to prosecution process and fixed penalty fine panels.
- Mentor students on a weekly basis with regard to attendance and late arrival if this is impacting on learning and academic progress.
- Have weekly meetings with Attendance Officer to identify patterns of absenteeism, unauthorised absences and leave of absence requests.
- Have timetabled meetings with Assistant Principal responsible for attendance.
- Ensure that the Student Engagement team addresses attendance and punctuality.
- Provide evidence of the impact of interventions on improving attendance and punctuality.
- Lead and promote attendance leagues and other reward strategies for good attendance where appropriate.

Assistant Principal responsible for attendance will:

- Ensure the Late Gate is staffed each day and that late students are centrally recorded and sanctions applied as appropriate on that day.
- Ensure parents and carers are regularly informed about punctuality issues.
- Develop strategies to tackle students who are persistently late to the Academy.
- Keep the Leadership Team up to date with attendance figures and strategies.
- Analyse attendance and punctuality data and provide regular monitoring reports
- Develop strategies to address areas of weakness in attendance and punctuality.
- Lead assemblies on attendance and punctuality.
- Keep governors informed about Academy attendance and punctuality.
- Research government information on attendance in academies and also on national trends.
- Attend meetings of the South Derbyshire Attendance strategy Group and share good practice.

Governors will:

- Scrutinise attendance and punctuality data at governors meetings.
- Support attendance panel meetings with targeted students where attendance has been identified as a cause for concern and is a persistent problem.

PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES

Registration

- The Academy day starts at 8.25am and all students should be in form and registered by 8.30. Students arriving after 8.30 will be marked as late on the Late Gate and be issued with a sanction.
- The afternoon session starts at 1.50pm, when all students will be registered by their class teacher during period 5.
- Students who arrive after registers have closed will be marked as late by their form tutor and where possible the number of minutes late recorded.
- A register needs to be taken for every lesson within the first 10 minutes. If students arrive late to lessons they should be recorded as late and kept behind where possible.
- Parents/carers should notify the Academy of any absence on the first day of absence or in advance if possible.

Attendance Process stages

Stage 1

- If attendance is under 95%, a letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them that the attendance of their child is being monitored.

Stage 2

- **Targeted Attendance Group.** Students will have been selected due to concerns with their attendance. They will have attendance below 92% and by monitoring and communication with both the student and parent/carer our aim is to increase this figure.
- To start this process a letter is sent to the parent/carer explaining that there are concerns with their child's attendance and the urgent need for improvement and that this a supportive measure to avoid further intervention.
- A 4 week monitoring period is then set, during which the student will work with the attendance team to improve their attendance. The action plan will focus on supporting the student and contacting home where necessary.
- Students on the targeted attendance group list are monitored weekly by the Pupil Premium Attendance Co-ordinator. This will be reviewed at the end of each 4 week period and the progress will be evaluated.

Stage 3

- **Attendance Panel.** This is for students who have attendance below 90% and have not made sufficient progress in the Targeted Attendance Group.
- Students will have their attendance monitored on a weekly basis by the Attendance Team
- Student, parent/carer will be signposted to agencies to assist with improving attendance, e.g. MAT or Academy Nurse.
- Parents/carers will meet with MAT worker, Governor and Pupil Premium Attendance Co-ordinator, on an attendance panel to discuss legal requirements of attendance, set clear targets for improved attendance and identify any support required to achieve these targets
- For any student whose attendance is less than 90%, medical evidence will be requested for their absence; absence is otherwise unauthorised.
- Targets are reviewed at the end of a 4 week period. Where targets have been met, no further action is taken. Where some improvement has been made, the monitoring period can be extended. If the level of improvement is unsatisfactory, the student will be referred to stage 4 of this process.

Stage 4

- **Penalty Procedure** occurs if the attendance of the student has not shown improvement after stage 3 and where the following criteria have been met:
 - 2 consecutive weeks of unauthorised attendance
 - 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 5 week period
 - Persistent absence threshold met with the last 12 months and where there is some current unauthorised absence
- In this stage a **Pre-Legal letter** is sent to advise parents and carers that a penalty or court process will be the next step if attendance does not improve. Students have 2 weeks to show attendance improvement. Penalty notices were introduced under the 1996 Education Act in order to reduce absence from place of study. Missing education can hinder achievement and progress, leave children at risk in the community and affect their life chances and opportunities.

Stage 5

- A **Fixed Penalty Notice warning Letter** is sent to parents / carers by the Local Authority, which identifies the number of consecutive days of full attendance required, or a penalty notice will be issued. The Local Authority will consider the percentage attendance after the monitoring period to decide whether targets have been met or to issue a penalty notice. A fine applies to parents / carers for each child who fails to attend school/Academy regularly. Payment within 21 days is charged at £60, which doubles to £120 if made after 21 but before 28 days.

Stage 6

- A **first warning letter for court** is used normally as part of a staged process but in emergency cases can be used immediately. The parent or carer is allowed 2/4 weeks for attendance to improve. The Local Authority will monitor data and decide whether to issue a second warning letter and set a second monitoring period. The Local Authority will then decide on whether to obtain a court date.
- In all cases the Academy's priority is to engage and support students in full time education, working alongside parents/carers within the parameters of relevant legislation. The reintegration of students after longer periods of absence is planned and given careful consideration to best meet the needs of the individual student.

Request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

Since 1 September 2013 Academies have not been able to authorise leave of absence for holidays in term time. The Statutory Instrument 2013 no 56 amends the 2006 regulations to remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten Academy days. **The amendments make clear that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Principals should determine the number of Academy days a child can be away from Academy if leave is granted.**

For a student to be given leave of absence in exceptional circumstances a 'Leave of Absence Request' must be completed and sent to the Principal stating the circumstances and dates and times required to be off Academy. A letter will then be written back to the parent stating if the leave of absence in exceptional circumstances has been granted. The LAR form can be found on our website under PARENTS / ATTENDANCE / FORMS.

If an Academy believes that a child is absent from the Academy for the purpose of a family holiday and no application for leave has been requested, a member of the Attendance Team will visit the home to ascertain the facts. The Academy can still request a fixed penalty fine to be issued in these circumstances.