



Policies and Procedures

Attendance Policy

Attendance Policy

(Revised November 2013)

Rationale

This policy has been established

- to promote high levels of attendance as a means of raising individual student performance
- to meet our legal requirements

Outcomes

We aim to

- achieve high levels of attendance in all year groups
- reduce unauthorised absence to the minimum possible level
- raise student performance through regular attendance

Process

We intend to achieve these outcomes by

- recognising high levels of attendance through our rewards system
- rigorously monitoring attendance levels and publishing them in the Academy prospectus and Academy Profile
- implementing effective procedures which are understood by all students, parents and staff
- liaising effectively with the Attendance Improvement Office
- publishing our procedures to parents annually in the Academy prospectus (see attached)
- following the policy set out by NW Area Inclusion Partnership for giving permission for family requested absence from school

School Attendance: Information for Parents

Your son/daughter should come to school every day. He or she should only be absent if the reason is 'unavoidable'. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can be fined up to £2,500 and/or be imprisoned for up to 3 months. Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the Academy (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason: illness or other unavoidable causes. Unauthorised absences are those which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes keeping children off school for trivial reasons; truancy, absences which have never been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to get a mark. Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable". Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house or as a reward. Prolonged or regular absence may be considered a Safeguarding issue and could necessitate a referral to Children's Social Care.

Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between the Academy, the parents and the child. It is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to

pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact the Academy at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the Academy may have to seek support from the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Service. They can impose fixed penalties or can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents or children may wish to contact the School Attendance Officer or the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Service themselves to ask their advice. The L.A. Service is independent of the Academy. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The Academy now employs an automated telephone calling system which will contact parents of absent students whose absence has not been explained. Details of this system are available from the Academy. It is essential that contact details are kept up to date. Following the procedures below should ensure parents are not contacted unnecessarily.

Illness and Other Legitimate Reasons

If your son/daughter is unfit for school, parents should contact the Academy on the first day, in person or by phone, preferably by 10 a.m. If not, an absence note, or a signed note in the student planner should be sent for any absence about which the Academy has had no contact. Parents are also asked to inform the Academy of any previously known absence. Absences cannot be authorised without this procedure.

Leave Of Absence

Changes to legislation by the Department for Education (DFE) with regard to holidays during term time

From 1st September 2013 the Academy is not allowed to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 9Amendment) Regulations 2013. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and they will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

A holiday cannot be considered as an exceptional circumstance. The legislation also states that any application for leave must be made to the Academy at least ten school days in advance of the proposed leave as the Academy cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

There are many situations which may constitute exceptional circumstances but as a generality we interpret exceptional in this context as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

- If an absence has not been authorised by the Principal and parents or carers remove their child from school, their child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the class register.

Absence for religious observance may be agreed by the Principal but will not exceed two days in any school year.

In addition to this new legislation there are also new regulations from 1st September 2013 in which penalty fines for parents and carers taking children out of school in unauthorised circumstances will be imposed more strictly. Parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school during term time but by law must ask permission for their child to miss school. If school's permission is not gained, parents/carers risk a fixed penalty notice. The cost of these notices will be £60 per child, payable within 21 days; if unpaid the penalty increases to £120 with a further 7 days to make the payment. Each parent can receive a fine for each child.

The Academy reserves the right to take off roll any student with extended absence in the following circumstances:

- the student has been continuously absent for not less than 20 days, such absence was not authorised, the Academy does not have grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause, and the Academy and the LA have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the student is.

Lates

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents/Carers are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Arriving later than 10:00am without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence.

Summary

The Academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Very good attendance is publically acknowledged each year. The suggestions of parents and children about home to encourage attendance are especially welcome.

The Academy has a duty to make your child's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. The Academy is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.