



# Attendance Policy – Richmond Academy

Additional guidance for academies is available.

## Document Control

| Description                           | By Whom                                                                                                  | Date    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Latest Review                         | Mrs May<br>Mrs Rahman / Mrs Jordon                                                                       | Jul 25  |
| Approved by Executive Leadership Team |  Antony Hughes<br>CEO |         |
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## Our attendance policy

### Aims and expectations

At Richmond Academy, we expect all our pupils to:

- Attend every day
- Attend on time
- Attend ready to learn

Good **attendance** and **punctuality** is EVERYONE's responsibility. Under the 1996 Education Act, **parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually.** Good attendance is vital to making sure that children make excellent progress and have the best chances for success in life. Children have the right to a full, broad and excellent education. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring excellent attendance and punctuality are achieved.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE EVERY DAY COUNTS



There are **190** days in a school year which leaves **175** days to spend on family time, shopping, appointments and other things.



| Attendance Percentage | Days missed over a school year                          |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 100%                  | 0 days                                                  |
| 95%                   | 10 days (2 weeks of school)                             |
| 90%                   | 20 days (4 weeks of school)                             |
| 85%                   | 30 days (6 weeks of school – approximately half a term) |
| 80%                   | 40 days (8 weeks of school)                             |

We aim for every child to be in school every day they possibly can be. Our target as a school is 96% attendance but for each child it is as close to 100% as they possibly can. Children have the right to attend every day and we look to work in partnership with parents to do all we can to allow this to happen.

Having clear responsibilities, routines and expectations helps children to attend regularly. This policy aims to support children, families and staff to understand the routines we have to ensure good attendance and what can be done to support children to attend regularly.

Some of the words used in this policy (identified in bold) are explained in appendix 1

## Pupils with Specific Medical or other needs

Whilst every pupil has the right to a full-time education and high attendance is expected for all pupils, it is recognised that there may be individual circumstances which are a specific barrier to attendance. Where this is the case, the academy, parents / carers and the pupil, along with any other relevant agency will work together to ensure the attendance of the pupil is the best it can be and that any absence is supported by alternative methods (e.g. hospital school, remote access to high quality learning opportunities etc). Where a pupil has a long-term illness or health issue which will result in 15 days or more illness, the local authority will be informed to ensure suitable provisions are in place to support the child's education whilst either in hospital receiving treatment and / or during recovery.

## Important Information

### School day timings

#### In the morning

|                                 | The school day starts (register is taken at): | A child is late (L code*) from: | A child is late after the register has closed (U code**) from: |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nursery                         | 8:45am                                        | 8:55am                          | 9:15am                                                         |
| Reception                       | 9:00am                                        | 9:10am                          | 9:30am                                                         |
| Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)     | 9:00am                                        | 9:10am                          | 9:30am                                                         |
| Key Stage 2 (Years 3,4,5 and 6) | 9:00am                                        | 9:10am                          | 9:30am                                                         |

\* "L code" is used where a child is late. This is still deemed present.

\*\* "U code" is late after the register is closed and is deemed an absence.

## In the afternoon

|                             | The afternoon session starts (register is taken at): | A child is late pm (L code*) from: | A child is late after the register has closed pm (U code**): |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nursery                     | 12:30pm                                              | 12:40pm                            | 1:00pm                                                       |
| Reception                   | 12:30pm                                              | 12:40pm                            | 1:00pm                                                       |
| Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) | 12:45pm                                              | 12:55pm                            | 1:15pm                                                       |
| Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) | 1:00pm                                               | 1:10pm                             | 1:30pm                                                       |
| Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6) | 1:15pm                                               | 1:25pm                             | 1:45pm                                                       |

## End of day (pick up time)

|                                 | The school day ends at: |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Nursery                         | 3:30pm                  |
| Reception                       | 3:20pm                  |
| Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)     | 3:20pm                  |
| Key Stage 2 (Years 3,4,5 and 6) | 3:20pm                  |

## Breakfast and After School clubs

- There is a breakfast club available from 8.30am
- There are after-school (extra-curricular) clubs available from 3:20-4:00pm throughout the week

## Our daily routines are

### Gates / doors open

Our main gate opens for pupils at 8:30am for those attending breakfast club. Children make their way to class from 8:45am

For those not attending breakfast club, front and back gates open at 8.45am, children make their way to their class.

Children and families are welcomed by staff at the gate

An early morning activity is available each morning as soon as the children arrive

The register is taken in class at the start of day.

## **Our regular attendance routines**

We have assemblies 3 times per week where we celebrate good attendance and improvement in attendance. This is a special time for all at our school.

We celebrate 100% attendance or notably improved attendance with a certificate

Staff encourage good attendance and have a relentless focus on improving attendance throughout the week.

The class attendance display is updated weekly.

'Ozzy the Owl' is given out each week to the class(es) that have the best attendance each week.

## **Responsibilities regarding attendance:**

**Ensuring good attendance is everyone's responsibility.** We all have a part to play in making sure all children are in school and thriving. In our academy, all staff are dedicated to supporting good attendance.

In order to ensure good attendance, our academy agrees to:

- Provide a safe learning environment
- Promote and encourage full attendance and punctuality
- Keep and maintain registers accurately
- Regularly analyse attendance data, monitoring attendance closely
- Report missing children to the Local Authority
- Maintain a consistent approach to marking registers
- Commit to provide a full educational experience for all pupils
- Ensure records of attendance are maintained on a daily basis, in line with legislation
- Follow up poor attendance or punctuality and persistent absence by inviting parents to have a meeting or a letter / phone call of concern.
- Provide supportive, approachable staff for advice and guidance
- Acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance
- Provide end of year celebrations for pupils with 100% attendance or for those who have shown excellent attendance considering individual circumstances or excellent progress from previous attendance outcomes.
- Provide annual reports to parents of their child's attendance
- Check all independent travellers and inform parent / carer at first instance if the child has not arrived.

Some staff have key responsibility for attendance and are contacts if parents / carers / staff have any queries or support needs.

## **Senior Attendance Champion**

The Senior Attendance Champions in School are **Ms Jordon and Mrs Costello**.

## **Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Officer in School is **Mrs Costello**.

## **Parents / Carers**

Parents / carers have a critical role to play. They are responsible for ensuring their child attends school on time everyday. We wish for all parents / carers to agree to the following:

- Ensure their child attends school everyday they can, is punctual, correctly equipped and dressed in uniform.
- Inform the school on the first day of absence, giving full valid reasons for absence before 9am. Daily contact is expected between parents / carers and school when the child is absent. Absence will be unauthorised unless a valid reason is given.
- Provide medical evidence if requested
- Maintain regular communications with school
- Avoid arranging medical / dental appointments during school time (as far as is possible)
- Inform the school if the child travels alone to school
- Not to book holidays during term time (see details below)
- Inform the school about any concerns or problems which might affect the child's attendance and punctuality

## **Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Do their best
- Understand and comply with school rules

The Board of Trustees, Central Harmony Trust staff and all academy staff have responsibilities for attendance and support the academy to ensure attendance is a key focus. Specific roles and responsibilities can be found in appendix 3.

## **Who to contact regarding attendance:**

### **For unexpected absence**

If a child is not going to be in school, parents/carers must contact the office 0161 260 0610 and select the attendance line as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

If there is no contact from home, the academy will try to make contact (by phone or home visit). It is important we have contact so we can ensure all children are safe.

## **Requesting time out of school**

To request **exceptional leave**, please speak to the school office.

Please note, holidays in term time will not be authorised. Other absence will be considered on an individual basis and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

## **Discussing attendance concerns**

To discuss any concerns regarding attendance, please contact Ms Jordon or Mrs Costello.

## **Parent / Carer Contact information**

Parents/carers must provide accurate and up to date contact details. This will be requested every year and parents / carers are encouraged to inform school of any changes during the year.

Parents/carers are responsible for updating the academy if their details change.

## **How we celebrate good attendance**

We have several ways to celebrate good and improving attendance. We realise that it is important to recognise improved attendance from any starting point and that for some pupils there are complex barriers which may make attending school every day more challenging (e.g. a child with regular hospital appointments). Our celebrations recognise improvements for individuals. We also look at class attendance and improvements in the short-term and over time.

### **Our celebrations include:**

- Certificates for good / improving attendance
- Weekly class of the week attendance
- Phone calls and notes home to celebrate improved attendance
- Termly rewards and certificates for most improved and 100% attendance

## **If a child is absent from school:**

We hope our pupils will be in school every day. However, this will not always be possible and we will make a decision regarding authorising absence on an individual basis. Where an absence is not authorised, parents / carer will be informed and there will be an opportunity to discuss.

If a child is absent from school, their parent / carer is expected to contact school (see the unexpected absence section) giving the child's name, class and reason for absence.

If there is no contact, school staff will telephone to find out why the child is absent. We have a duty of care to make sure children are safe so it is important we know why they are not in school and that they are safe. **High levels of absence, without good reason, can be a safeguarding concern.**



## Authorised and Unauthorised absences

### Authorised absences include:

- Leave granted by the Principal (exceptional circumstances only)
- Religious day – the Principal will authorise **one day**, absence will be coded R.
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause\*
- The pupil is attending an approved off-site activity and receiving special off-site tuition
- The pupil is attending a Pupil referral unit
- The pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- The pupil is attending school for a short time on a reduced timetable (exceptional circumstances only)
- If the child is unwell and going to be absent from school, parents must inform the office before 9am to report the child's absence. See above for details of how to do this. If you do not contact the school, contact will be attempted by the school and in some cases a home visit may be made. If there is no contact that day, the absence will be unauthorised. It is important we have contact so we can ensure all children are safe.

## Exceptional Leave

Term-time leave will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. bereavement or serious illness). This will require a discussion with Ms Jordon or Mrs Costello.

Any notifications of leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave of Absence Notification Form' which is available from the academy office.

Taking a pupil out of school, except in agreed authorised circumstances will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence** and may attract more formal interventions including a **Penalty Notice**.

### Exceptional leave is **NOT**:

- Availability of cheap flights and / or holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Parent / carer work commitments
- Poor weather experienced during school holidays
- Dates overlapping with the beginning or end of half terms or terms
- Circumstances where children can be looked after by close family members i.e. the other parent
- A sibling with a special educational need or a sibling attending a medical appointment

Where exceptional leave is granted, a return date must be specified. Parents/carers may lose their child's place on the school roll if the child does not return within five days of the agreed date of return.

## Religious Observance

The academy will try to ensure that families are able to celebrate key religious festivals without it affecting their child's education.

When large numbers of our pupils are affected, the Academy will try to accommodate Trust closure days as close to anticipated religious observance days, to allow for pupils to take religious observance without affecting their attendance. Wherever this is facilitated it will be for one academy day. All pupils must return to the Academy as usual the following day. Where this is not possible, specific decisions regarding time off for religious observance will be made and shared with parents well in advance. **Only one day of absence will be authorised.**

## **Appointments**

- As far as possible, parents/carers should attempt to book routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Where this is not possible, appointment card/ evidence of an appointment (e.g. text) must be shown to school if requested.
- Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.
- If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they must be signed out by a parent/carer and signed back in on their return.
- Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **Approved Educational Activity**

Children who are educated off-site or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, such as school residential trips, day visits to secondary schools or curriculum enrichment activities at local secondary schools are marked as present. Details of the codes used can be found in appendix 2.

## **Holidays in term time**

Where a family takes a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and it will be referred to the Local Authority. A **Penalty Notice** may be issued to each parent for each child. This is in line with the National framework for penalty notices.

All leave of absence taken without the agreement of the Academy will be recorded as unauthorised.

Illness immediately before or after a holiday will be marked as unauthorised without a medical note.

## **Children Missing in Education**

If we cannot contact a family and do not know where a child is, we will report them as missing in education. This report is made to the Local Authority. The LA has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

## **Re-integration Meetings**

For children who have long periods of absence (e.g. hospitalisation), there will be a re-integration meeting with parents to ensure the return to school is successful. At the meeting expectations for attendance will be discussed.

## **Punctuality**

- All pupils are expected to arrive at school on time (as noted above)
- Pupils arriving to school 10 minutes after the start of the day will be marked as L (Late before register closes).

- Pupils arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the morning / afternoon session will be marked as U (Late after register closed). This is an unauthorised absence.
- Parents / carers are expected to collect their children on time, should there be an issue due to an unforeseen circumstance, please inform the school office as soon as possible.

| Minutes lost each day | Days lost per school year              |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 5 minutes             | 3 days                                 |
| 10 minutes            | 6.5 days (over 1 week of school)       |
| 15 minutes            | 10 days (2 weeks of school)            |
| 20 minutes            | 13 days (2.5 weeks of school)          |
| 30 minutes            | 19 days (just under 4 weeks of school) |

## Monitoring attendance and using data

Attendance data is a useful tool to provide detail about where our attendance is good and areas which need support and additional focus.

### How we gather attendance data

Registers are taken twice a day, and this is kept on our school Management Information system. Pupils are awarded an attendance mark for being present in the morning, and a second mark for afternoon attendance.

Daily attendance registers are completed within the class and children are marked present or absent.

The registers are reviewed by Mrs Wrigley. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then there will be a phone call home to check on why a child is not in school. Where necessary a home visit will be undertaken.

Where there is a reason given for absence, a decision will be made whether to authorise this and an **absence code** will be added to the register (see appendix 2).

### How we Monitor attendance data?

Daily attendance is monitored by the attendance lead and SLT. Absence phone calls and home visits are made as required after this analysis.

Weekly attendance is monitored. Parents will be made aware if their child's attendance is 'at risk' of falling below national averages and lower. If the attendance drops below 90% the pupil is deemed a "**persistent absentee**" and closer monitoring and support will be undertaken. Children at risk of dropping below this become a focus and discussions will be held with parents to ensure attendance improves.

Half termly and termly attendance is monitored by the academy and the Trust central team. Patterns are identified for individuals, groups, year groups and the school as a whole. We look at where our focus should be and the impact of interventions that we have completed in the previous term.

Parents / carers will be made aware of their child's attendance termly as routine (e.g. at start of year, parent consultations). If there are any concerns raised about a child's attendance during weekly monitoring, we will contact parents / carers to identify our concerns and to offer an opportunity to discuss how we may be able to support the family to improve their child's attendance.

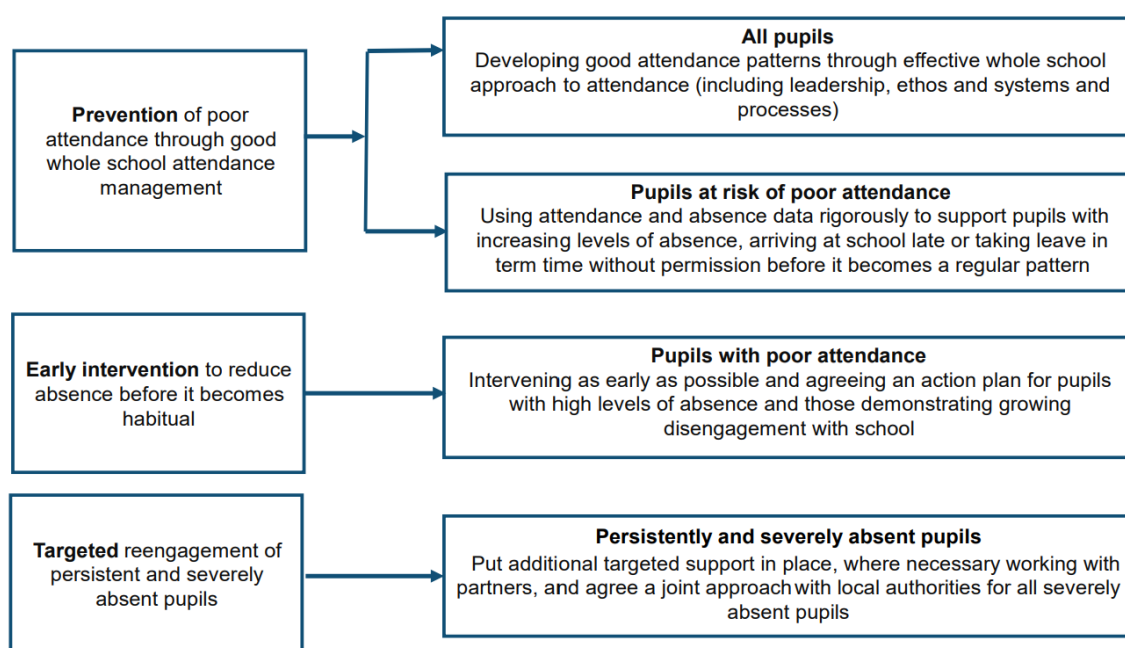
Returns of academy data are made termly to the Department for Education and benchmark data exists to compare our academies locally and nationally.

We set attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Academy Senior Leadership Team and the Trust Leadership Team. Attendance data is sent to the Board of Trustees.

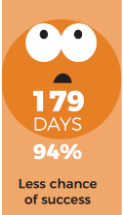
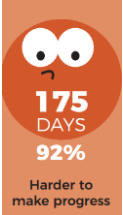
Attendance procedures are regularly analysed for impact so we can ensure they are supporting improvements in attendance across the academy.

## Tailored support to help reduce absence:

### Effective school attendance improvement and management



## Levels of attendance support and intervention

| Attendance %                                                                        | Lead by                                                               | Attendance Strategies in place                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Class teachers<br>(with light-touch monitoring by attendance officer) | <b>For all pupils</b><br>Warm welcome<br>High quality provision which meets need<br>Safe and inclusive environment<br>In-class attendance celebration and praise<br>Weekly attendance assembly<br>Attendance rewards (see celebration section for details)<br>Parents / Carers recognised for their role in excellent attendance<br><br>Weekly attendance check<br>Half termly monitoring of attendance to ensure high attendance being maintained<br>Termly report to parents / carers and celebration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|    |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|   | Attendance Officer                                                    | As above + (after October half term or earlier if significant concerns developing / there are historical concerns regarding attendance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter 1a may be sent once a child drops between 93 and 95.9% (to alert parents / carers and to offer support)</li> <li>Discussion with parent / carer encouraged. This is to offer support.</li> <li>If no improvement, letter 1b. Meeting requested by attendance lead. Informal discussion and offer of support</li> </ul> <p><b>The nature of these meetings and discussions is one of support. How can we work together to ensure attendance improves?</b></p> <p><b>Where absence is unauthorised consider whether the National framework for penalty notices applies and should be considered (likely to be the case for unauthorised holidays during term-time)</b></p>                                                                                                                                            |
|  | Attendance Officer                                                    | Letter 2a may be sent once a child drops between 90.1 and 92.9% (to alert parents / carers and to offer further support) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance lead and senior leader to meet with parent / carer and support offered. Attendance plan / contract put in place for time-limited period.</li> <li>Consider referral to outside agencies (e.g. Early help, local charity organisations with agreement from parent / carers)</li> <li>If no improvement, letter 2b. Continuing concerns regarding potential persistent absence. Potential for referral to education welfare (dependent on reasons for absence), continued support offered. Absence will not be authorised without professional evidence (e.g. medical note)</li> </ul> <p>Where absence is unauthorised, consider whether the National framework for penalty notices applies and should be considered (not the first option but must be considered in line with support, notice to improve or other options)</p> |
|  | Senior leader<br><br>EWO                                              | Letter 3a and discussion with Education Welfare Officer (may occur earlier if historical concerns or significant concerns in-year) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior leader has meeting with parent / carer. Individual attendance plan / contract.</li> <li>Move to formal support process if support is not working or there is non-engagement.</li> <li>Consider referral to other services (e.g. Child Social care, early help etc).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|  |  |                                                                                                                                          |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | If no improvement, Education welfare will support next steps (see formalising support for more information). Support offered throughout. |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **Parental engagement**

Our academy wants to work closely with parents and carers to ensure all children attend school every day. We will provide information to parents to help them understand their role in attendance and to make sure our expectations are clear. This will be through communications such as letters, leaflets and an attendance workshop for parents / carers.

## **Where attendance is lower than 96%**

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure their child attends school every day unless there is an exceptional circumstance. However, we recognise that every circumstance is different and there are sometimes barriers and challenges which make attendance more difficult. These may be short-term or longer term in nature. We aim to support parents and carers where there are challenges as much as possible. The needs of families differ so it is important that there is an ongoing dialogue between the child, home and school to identify the barriers and seek ways to remove them.

Parents / carers are encouraged to speak to Mrs Wrigley, if they are facing any challenges which is making their child's attendance more difficult. If school identify a child's level of attendance is decreasing, they will arrange to speak to parents and carers at an early stage to prevent more serious attendance issues.

## **Persistent Absence – below 90%**

A child is deemed **Persistently absent** if they have an attendance of lower than 90%.

For children at risk of becoming persistently absent, school will speak to parents / carers so they are aware of the concerns and to support improvement in attendance.

Where there is persistent absence and ongoing attendance concerns, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to Ms Jordon. The Local Authority attendance officer will be alerted, and a plan will be drawn up improve attendance. This will be monitored, and improvements noted and celebrated.

Absences will not be authorised without evidence from a professional (e.g. medical note). A multi-agency approach will be considered, and referral made to relevant support services if it would be of benefit

## **Local Authority Concern – below 85% (Oldham only)**

In Oldham a multi-agency panel meets and may discuss any pupils with attendance below 85%. Targets are set based on this. The Local Authority receive attendance data automatically and may therefore contact families directly or through school.

## Severe Absence – below 50%

A child is deemed **Severely absent** if they have an attendance of lower than 50%.

If pupil absence drops below 50%, a multi-agency approach will take place in partnership with the local authority Attendance Officer. The agencies involved will depend on the individual circumstance but may include:

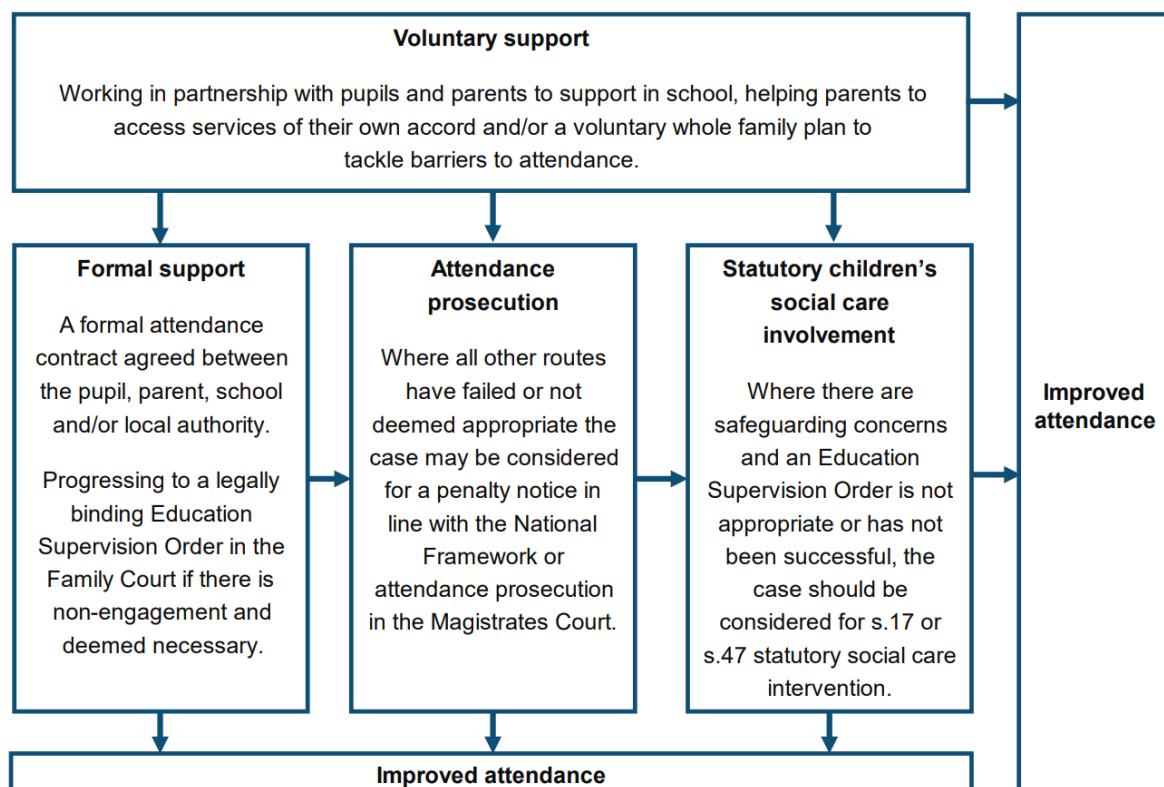
- Social Care
- Support teams through Early Help
- Medical teams
- Youth teams
- Local charities

## Formalising support

Where a child is deemed persistently or severely absent, support will be formalised. There will be a **multi-agency approach** considered in partnership with the **Local Authority attendance officers**. The aim is to support families to improve their children's attendance and to provide support with this. At all times, the aim is to provide support to improve attendance. However, where this is not successful or engaged with and attendance is unauthorised, formal procedures will be considered. Underpinning this consideration is the right for children to have access to a full-time education.

Prior to formal, legal intervention a number of avenues will be explored to support improved attendance:

### Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



## **Formal sanctions**

Where support has not helped and a pupil's attendance remains of serious concern, the academy and Local authority will consider moving to more formal sanctions. In the unlikely event these sanctions become relevant, information will be given to the parents / carers well in advance as part of earlier discussions.

These are dependent on the individual circumstance but may include:

## **Attendance contracts**

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement with either the academy or the local authority to address irregular attendance. This is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

There is no obligation for the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract and it may not always be appropriate but should be explored before moving to an education supervision order or prosecution.

The aim should be for all parties to work in partnership. It is decided to use an attendance contract, a meeting should be arranged with the parents and include the pupil if they are old enough to understand. The meeting should explain the purpose of the contract and why using one would be beneficial. Parent and where appropriate pupil views should be obtained. Agreement should be made regarding monitoring of the contract. Non-compliance with an attendance contract will be discussed with the parent. Any failure or refusal may be presented as evidence if a prosecution route is taken.

The contents of an attendance contract can be found in working together to improve school attendance 2024.

## **Education supervision orders**

Where a voluntary early help or attendance contract has not been successful, an education supervision order can be a useful alternative to provide for more legal intervention without criminal prosecution. The Academy and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial to the people and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, there should be a discussion with the designated safeguarding lead regarding whether a referral to social care under section 17 or section 47 would be more appropriate. In all cases local authorities must consider using an ESO before moving to prosecution.

ESOs are made through the family or High Court. They give the local authority a formal role. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duty to secure the child's education are superseded by a duty to comply with directions given under the ESO. The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured for a period of up to three years at a time. Details regarding the content of an ESO can be



found in working together to improve school attendance 2024. Non-compliance with an ESO can result in prosecution and parents may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.

## **Attendance Prosecution**

Prosecution is a last resort where all other voluntary informal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Only local authorities can prosecute parents. Details regarding attendance prosecution can be found in working together to improve school attendance 2024.

## **Parenting orders**

Parenting orders an order that can be imposed by the court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/ or community order. All parenting orders specify a responsible officer which will be named on the order this would be the most appropriate lead practitioner working with the family. Any breach of the order could lead to a fine of up to £1000.

## **Fixed penalty notices – National framework for Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure but their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school they are registered at. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour.

Penalty notices are issued in line with current regulations and can only be done in liaison with the local authority.

There is a national threshold to consider regarding penalty notices. This does not mean there is a blanket position on issuing penalty notices but when the threshold is reached a penalty notice should be considered. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence. These can be consecutive or not. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms and different school years.

Where the threshold has been met, academies are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case?
  - If yes, academies are expected to continue with existing support without a penalty notice or they may issue a notice to improve if support is not working or being complied with.
  - If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to all conditions

- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance unchanged parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
- The local authority will also consider whether issuing a penalty notice is in the public interest.

Where the answer is yes to these questions, a penalty notice should be issued. If not another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

Whichever action is taken after the national threshold has been met, academies should monitor the impact of the action.

From autumn 2024, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued same parent within three years of the date of issue of the 1st. Alternative action should be taken instead which will often include considering prosecution.
- Penalty notices which have been issued by other schools and other local authorities remain valid within the three-year period.

The Local authority has a code of conduct for issuing penalty notices and how to pay.

## **Improvement and ending formal support**

Where improvements have been made, these will be celebrated. There will be a period of time to monitor sustained improvements. Once there is agreement in the multi-agency team that improvements have been sustained, formal support will end. Ongoing school monitoring will continue as detailed in the tailored support section above.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people based on their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 and it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote and encourage equality in our academies.

## Data Protection Statement

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy.

All data will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

| Data Audit For This Policy |                                                                   |                                                           |                                                                                                                  |                                                                |                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What?                      | Probable Content                                                  | Why?                                                      | Who?                                                                                                             | Where?                                                         | When?                                                                                           |
| Attendance policy          | Any personal information including personal sensitive information | Required to be retained as part of school data management | Academy Mgt Information system, school staff as needed, attendance officer, SLT, Trust central staff as required | Kept on file at academy (and Trust central where appropriate). | Held on file following relevant retention periods (dependent on nature of personal information) |

As such, our assessment is that this policy:

| Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements | Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements | Has a High Level Of Data Compliance Requirements |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                                           |                                                      | ✓                                                |

## Appendix 1 – Definitions

| Word                               | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attendance                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coming into school</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Absence                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrival at school after the register has closed.</li> <li>Not attending school for any reason.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Authorised Absence                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An absence for sickness for which the academy has granted leave.</li> <li>Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the academy has granted leave.</li> <li>Religious or cultural observances for which the academy have granted leave.</li> <li>An absence due to unplanned and significant family emergency, meaning you must leave in an emergency.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Unauthorised Absence               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without an accepted reason.</li> <li>Truancy before or during the school day.</li> <li>Recurring medical appointments of a non-urgent nature.</li> <li>Absences which have never been properly explained.</li> <li>Arrival at school after the register has closed.</li> <li>Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.</li> <li>Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed and have been booked or planned in advance.</li> <li>Leaving school for no reason during the day.</li> </ul> |
| Persistent Absence                 | Attendance below 90% (Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Punctuality                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being on-time</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Severe Absence                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance below 50%</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Register                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal document which details whether a child is in school for that session</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Exceptional leave                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unavoidable leave which is not part of the norm and would be extremely unusual. This would be discussed on an individual basis</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Penalty Notice                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A fine issued by the Local authority for unauthorised attendance</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Absence code                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A code used to describe the type of absence. These can be authorised or unauthorised (see appendix 2)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Local Authority                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local council</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Multi-agency approach              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint working between those who work with the family. This may include health, social care, the police, voluntary agencies, Attendance officers, Family support workers etc.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Local Authority attendance officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The attendance officer allocated to the school. They support school to ensure all children come to school every day. This role is also known as Education Welfare officer (EWO)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## Appendix 2 – Attendance and Absence Codes

Attendance and absence must be given a code on the register. For more information, go to:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) (New codes for 24/25 in yellow)

|     |                                                                                 |     |                                                                          |   |                                                                      |    |                                                                         |     |                                                                         |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| / \ | Present                                                                         | G   | Family holiday (not agreed)                                              | O | Unauthorised (not covered by other code)                             | V  | Educational visit or trip                                               | Y 2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel                 |
| B   | Attending any other approved educational activity                               | I   | Illness (not medical)                                                    | P | Approved sporting activity                                           | W  | Work experience                                                         | Y3  | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed        |
| C 1 | Leave of absence to attend regulated performance or regulated employment abroad | J 1 | Interview                                                                | Q | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements | X  | Non-compulsory school age not required to be in school                  | Y4  | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed |
| C2  | Leave of absence for compulsory age pupil subject to part-time timetable        | K   | Attending place other than school <b>arranged by the Local Authority</b> | R | Religious observance                                                 | #  | Planned whole or partial school closure                                 | Y5  | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention              |
| C   | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances                                  | L   | Late (before reg closed)                                                 | S | Study leave                                                          | -  | All should attend/ No mark recorded                                     | Y6  | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law       |
| D   | Dual registration at another school                                             | M   | Medical / Dental                                                         | T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes                          | Z  | Prospective pupil not on admission register                             | Y7  | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause                 |
| E   | Excluded (no alternative provision)                                             | N   | No reason yet provided                                                   | U | Late (after register closed)                                         | Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available |     |                                                                         |

A, B, K, P, V and W are attendance codes.

D, X, Q, Y1 – Y7 are codes which are not a possible attendance so aren't included in attendance possible figures

C1, C2, C, M, J1, S,T,R,I, E are authorised absence

G, N, O, U are unauthorised absences

Z, # are not collected as part of data analysis

## **Appendix 3 - Key roles and responsibilities**

### **Pupils**

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Do their best
- Understand and comply with school rules

### **Parents / Carers**

- Ensure their child attends school everyday they can, is punctual, correctly equipped and dressed in uniform.
- Inform the school on the first day of absence, giving full valid reasons for absence before 9am. Daily contact is expected between parents / carers and school when the child is absent. Absence will be unauthorised unless a valid reason is given.
- Provide medical evidence if requested
- Maintain regular communications with school
- Avoid arranging medical / dental appointments during school time (as far as is possible)
- Inform the school if the child travels alone to school
- Not to book holidays during term time (see details below)
- Inform the school about any concerns or problems which might affect the child's attendance and punctuality

### **Class Teachers**

- Class teachers will be responsible for checking-in with pupils on their return.
- Class teachers will ensure a high-quality provision and engaging curriculum
- Class teachers will review their class attendance, discuss attendance concerns with parents / carers and work with others to offer wider support as necessary.

### **All Staff and volunteers**

- All staff and volunteers will be responsible for raising the profile of good attendance in line with school policy, celebrating success and communicating the importance with pupils and parents. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- All staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- All staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.

### **Administration Officer**

- Administration staff welcome pupils into school and provide a welcoming entrance to the school
- Administration staff note absences and ensure the Management Information System is updated accurately
- Administration staff make first day contact phone calls and liaise with classroom staff and the attendance officer

### **Attendance Officer**

- Attendance Officers will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of procedures, monitoring of attendance and communication with parents.
- Attendance Officers celebrate good and improved attendance and encourage a positive attendance culture
- Attendance Officers ensure decisions regarding absence are appropriate and correctly recorded
- Attendance Officers analyse attendance data and communicate with parents / carers through meetings, letters, and attendance at multi-agency meetings
- Attendance Officers undertake home visits as appropriate

- Attendance Officers flag concerns with DSLs and the Senior Attendance Champion

### **Senior Attendance Champion:**

- Will lead on improvements in attendance, ensuring that good attendance is a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life.
- Sets a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by staff.
- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly.
- Will be accountable for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures.
- Celebrates good and improved attendance and encourage a positive attendance culture. Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance in a variety of ways.
- The Senior Attendance Champion, in conjunction with the Principal (where different) ensures there are sufficient resources allocated to attendance
- Ensures absence is authorised appropriately
- Has a strong grasp of the data to ensure individuals, cohorts and groups are identified and attendance needs met.
- Analyses the impact of interventions
- Leads on discussions regarding extended leave with families and ensures procedures are followed for families where attendance is of concern
- Recognise that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process
- Recognise that children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Will be able to explain the current attendance trends and processes to internal and external partners

### **Trust Safeguarding Team**

- The Trust Safeguarding Team will provide half termly data to academies to support their analysis of attendance
- The Trust Safeguarding Team will support academies to implement the attendance policy and guidance on a priority basis
- The Trust Safeguarding Team will provide CPD and updates for all attendance staff

### **Executive Leadership Team**

- Has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Trust's complaints policy.
- Monitors attendance across the Trust and ensures Senior Attendance Champions are prioritising attendance according to policy
- Report attendance outcomes and procedures to Trustees

### **Board of Trustees**

#### **The Board of Trustees:**

- Has overall responsibility for the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures.
- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

## Appendix 4 - School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, **parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually**. A **register** must be taken at the start of the morning and afternoon session. This is a legal document and set codes are followed (see appendix 2)

By law, only schools can authorise absence. Parents / carers must let school know the reason for any **absence** and a decision will be made about whether to authorise this. It is unlikely that absence will be **authorised** for holidays or for any activity which could occur out of the school day. Whilst the Principal will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

### **Regulations related to this policy are:**

1996 Education Act

Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Education (Pupil Registration – England) Regulations 2013



## Appendix 5 – Children Absent from School long-term (guidance for Academies)

The following procedures will need to be implemented if a child is not in school for a prolonged period of time (as soon as known but certainly if the absence is likely to be for more than 15 days). It is the parents' legal responsibility to send their children to school.

### Safeguarding

The Academy has a duty of care to ensure that the child is safe and well.

If a child is in hospital, this may be in liaison with the hospital teacher, medical professional or through parents. If the child is at home, this will be in liaison with Parents / Carers.

A phone call will be made twice weekly by the attendance officer/ class teacher to touch base with the family and check-in on the child. This will be a general phone call to see how the child is and whether there is any support school can offer to help the child. School or an agency partner needs to speak to the child regularly to touch base.

Once per fortnight, a home visit will be made to see the child. This may be by school or an appropriate Local Authority partner. This is not required if a child is in hospital as health partners will be able to oversee whether the child is safe.

The purpose of these calls and visits are to ensure the child and family are safe and well and to offer any support. Opportunities to ask about any timescale for a return to school should be taken but discussed sensitively, dependent on the individual circumstance.

It is important that Parents / Carers support this process. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

### Alerting Local Authority and Health Partners

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and LA SEND Officer (where appropriate) will be made aware of the ongoing absence and reasons for this. School will work with LA partners and home to explore the likely length of absence and strategies which could support the child's reintegration into school when appropriate. This will depend on the reason for absence.

If the long-term absence is due to medical reasons, School may seek permission to speak to the School Nurse or Child's GP to determine how best to support the child during their illness and when they become well enough to attend school once more.

Where there is non-engagement from the family, the Academy will work with LA partners to determine an appropriate response in line with Working together to improve school attendance. This will include offers of support but *may* result in legal intervention if there is no improvement in engagement and attendance.

Every situation is different and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. It is important that Parents continue to engage with the Academy during the absence.

## **Reintegration**

Schools have a duty to ensure that all children on roll are safe and are accessing their entitlement to full-time education unless illness or other authorised circumstance prevents this from happening.

If a child is well enough to attend school but has been absent, a plan should be put in place to facilitate an appropriate and timely return. This will be relevant to the specific circumstances of the individual but adjustments may be made to facilitate a successful return to school.

This may include

Discussion about whether an Interim Reduced Timetable may be appropriate for a time-limited period. Reasonable adjustments to the day (e.g. check-ins, additional sensory breaks, access to a key worker etc).

This will be discussed with Parents and regularly reviewed.

The plan will be co-constructed with Parents. The expectation is that all partners are working towards reintegrating a child back into school. Support from LA and Health Partners may be required.