

# Attendance Policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	Local Governing Body	<b>Approved Date:</b> October 2019
<b>Review Date:</b>	July 2020	
<b>Links</b>	Safeguarding policy, Child Protection Policy	
<b>Staff responsible</b>	VP Personal Development, Behaviour and attitudes	

**Contents**

- 1. Aims .....1
- 2. Legislation and guidance .....1
- 3. Academy procedures .....2
- 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence .....3
- 5. Strategies for promoting attendance.....4
- 6. Attendance monitoring .....4
- 7. Roles and responsibilities .....5
- 8. Monitoring arrangements .....5
- Appendix 1: attendance codes.....6

**1. Aims**

Our academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to academy attendance by: Promoting excellent, 100% attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled Acting early to address patterns of absence We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and we will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. Good attendance (at least 95.5%) is essential to the learning, achievement and well-being of all learners, and particularly for those learners with SEND and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds, and for those who have had previously disrupted education.

**2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the academy attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on academy attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern academy attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the academy census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### **3. Academy procedures**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all academies (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in academy by 8:30 on each academy day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 and will be kept open until 9:10. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:00 and will be kept open until 12:20

#### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the academy on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents can inform school of their child's absence by telephone and speaking to a member of the attendance team after 8:00 or leaving a telephone message before 8:00. Please contact 0121 289 5900 and select option 1. If leaving a telephone message parents are to ensure they leave details of their child's name, year group, reason for illness and how long they expect their child to off school.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

#### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents should provide evidence of a medical/dental appointment to the attendance team at least two days before the appointment date.

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

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Students who arrive late to school but before the register closed on three occasions will incur a break time detention.

A pastoral leader will contact families on each day a student is late to school. If lateness becomes frequent the pastoral team will arrange a face to face meeting with families to discuss the issue. Students who arrive late to school after the register has closed without an authorised reason will incur an after school detention and a member of the pastoral team will contact family to discuss the issue.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The academy will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. A member of the pastoral team will contact parents each day a student is absent to ascertain the reasons for a child's absence and decide if the absence is authorised or not and discuss with parents accordingly.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Student attendance is reported to parents in the following ways. Half termly attendance certificates will be sent home with students on the last school day of each half term. If a student is absent on the last school 4 day of the half term their attendance certificate will be posted home. Students attendance is published on all formal academic reports. Students are given their attendance and weekly attendance targets each Monday of the academic year which they are required to enter into their school planners.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

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

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as those that have a material, compelling and unavoidable impact on the wellbeing of a pupil. The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised** absence include:

Illness and unavoidable medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3 (an appointment card will be required for medical/dental appointments)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

**NO holiday leave in term time will be granted.**

**Unauthorised absence will be tackled robustly by the academy in the following ways:**

The school analyses student attendance and unauthorised absence on a weekly basis. Any student who has ten unauthorised absence in a twelve month period will be referred to the school EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) service for additional support. If a students attendance does not improve as a result the EWO will give consideration to entering parents onto the Fast Track legal process. Parents wishing to educate their

child at home must write to the school attendance team informing them of their intentions. All parents wishing to home educate their child will be contacted by the Assistant Principal in charge of Attendance and will be invited into school for a formal meeting to discuss the matter.

#### **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Academies can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during academy hours without a justifiable reason. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

#### **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Cockshut Hill School recognises the importance of school attendance both from academic and safeguarding points of view. School encourages students to attend school regularly through weekly attendance competitions, Weekly attendance focus during form tutor time every Monday, attendance assemblies which link attendance to student performance at GCSE. Every week students are given their attendance to date and their end of week attendance target which they enter into their school planners allowing parents to discuss their child's attendance on a weekly basis.

Cockshut Hill supports parents in ensuring their child attends school regular in the following way:

Weekly information as to their child's current attendance and their weekly attendance targets.

Half termly attendance reports.

Current attendance reported on all academic reports.

Annual attendance letter detailing the process for school absence.

Daily telephone calls to each family which has not made contact with school regarding their child's absence. EWO/Pastoral support for parents who's attendance falls below 95%.

Pastoral support for parents who's attendance begins to fall or shows patterns in absence (for example – absence is on the same day of the week)

#### **6. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

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

Parents must contact the attendance team (0121 289 5900 option 1) on each day their child is absent from school.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Trust Board and the Local Governing Body.

The academy will collect and store attendance data via the Management Information System (MIS) Arbor.

Data will be analysed, monitored and evaluated to track the attendance patterns of:

- Individual pupils
- Groups of pupils (including boys, girls, SEND, ethnic minority background, age group, those in receipt of additional funding)

These analyses will inform the academy's interventions with pupils and groups of pupils, and parents, to support improved attendance.

## 7. Roles and responsibilities

### 7.1 The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy on at least a termly basis. It scrutinizes how effectively this policy is put in place, and reports the impact of the policy to the Board of Trustees.

### 7.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the academy, and for monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the LGB. The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### 7.3 The Attendance Lead:

Monitors attendance data at the academy and at individual pupil, and group level Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal

Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Provides weekly updates to all staff about the attendance figures for pupils and groups

Provides evaluation of the impact of actions taken to improve attendance Provides ½ termly up-to-date analysis of attendance trends and patterns for leaders, the LGB, and Education Directors and any external scrutiny

### 7.4 Class Teachers/form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes. All staff are responsible for promoting and encouraging good attendance through their daily interactions with pupils and through the provision of high quality teaching. Form Tutors have a pivotal role in monitoring and improving attendance through their relationships with students, tutoring work, and the robust implementation of rewards systems for good attendance.

### 7.5 Attendance staff

Attendance staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the academy system.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Education Directors (overall policy) and Principals (local adjustments for context). At every review, the policy will be shared with the LGB.

**9. Links with other policies** This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on academy attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrived late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the academy
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending another session at another setting where they are also registered

J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in an supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
V	Educational Trip or Visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organized, or approved, by the academy
W	Work Experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
<b>Authorised Absence</b>		
Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on holiday that was not approved by the academy
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	Academy is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at the academy after the register closed
X	Not required to be in the academy	Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the academy

#	Planned academy closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half term/bank holiday/INSET day
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