



## Attendance Policy

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***For Office Use Only:***

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to Academy attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend Academy

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(2024\)](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of Academy attendance across the Academy's policies and ethos
- Making sure Academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole Academy
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the Academy
- Monitoring Academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the Academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs R Clarke and can be contacted via the Academy office on 01507 353458.

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The Academy attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to Academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs R Clarke, who is supported by Mrs P Lea, who is the Senior Administrator for the Academy - they can be contacted via the Academy office on 01507 353458

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the Academy promptly at the start of the day and after lunch.

### **3.6 Academy administration staff**

Academy administration staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the Academy system
- Transfer calls from parents to Mrs R Clarke an appropriate time, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

The designated administration assistant for attendance is Mrs P Lea.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the Academy to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the Academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the Academy day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend Academy every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in Academy by 8:45am on each Academy day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 8:55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:55pm for all years

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the Academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the Academy admin staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the Academy in advance of the appointment.

Parent/Carer must complete a Leave of Absence form giving at least two full weeks' notice.

The Academy will check legislation and guidance, including what constitutes 'special circumstances' and what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances', and reasons for authorising/not authorising Leave of Absence.

The Academy may telephone the parent/carer if insufficient information is submitted. The Principal may grant or deny the request.

The Academy will complete the 'Reasons for Refusal' on Leave of Absence form.

The Academy will return the form to the parent, files copies of all paperwork as evidence, copy retained for Education Welfare Service.

The Academy will monitor attendance/absence over the appropriate period.

The Academy will inform the Education Welfare Officer of related unauthorised absence. Academy and Education Welfare Officer liaise to determine course of action which may include Referral, action towards Penalty Notice, Fast Track to Improving Attendance (up to and including Prosecution).

Please note: All requests for Leave of Absence must be submitted prior to a student's absence, as permission cannot be given retrospectively.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the Academy can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

##### **What time will the gates be opened in the morning?**

- Staff will open the gates at approximately 8.45am for all children.
- All relevant staff should be outside as the gates are opened.
- Staff should greet the parents/children at the gates.
- As the children come in, they must go down to the appropriate classrooms

##### **What happens at 8.45am?**

- Each class enters the Academy through their designated entrance.
- All staff connected to the class should welcome the pupils
- Mrs R Clarke will wait at the gates for any late arrivals
- Custodian will begin locking the gates, leaving the main gate open.
- The main gate will be closed when the other gates have been locked.

##### **What happens if a child arrives after 8.50am?**

- If a child is late and gates are closed, the child must enter the Academy through main reception.
- It is important that there is a clear routine for any child who is late.
- Any child who is late will be recorded as such, which may prompt letters/conversations with parents/carers – this will help keep records accurate.

##### **When must registers be completed by teachers?**

- Registers should be taken in silence to ensure accuracy (and for good behaviour).
- They must be taken and submitted by 9.00am, at the very latest.
- The register marks must reflect the children in the class at that time (obviously, this might, on occasions, include a child who has arrived but is out of the classroom for any reason when the register is taken).
- Registers should not be saved before 9.00am as some children may be in the cloakroom putting their things away.

##### **How should registers be marked for any child who is not present?**

- An 'N' mark must always be entered for any child who is not present when the class teacher takes the register.
- If a child arrives late or we are notified of a reason for absence, the correct mark will be entered by a member of the administration team.

- This includes any absence we have been notified about in advance.

### **What procedures are in place for children who are persistently late?**

If a child has been late on **3 occasions**, they will receive a phone call home from the Attendance Officer (Mrs R Clarke) or the Senior Administrator (Mrs P Tuplin). This call should happen as close to the incident of the 3<sup>rd</sup> lateness as possible and at least within 48 hours (unless close to the end of the week). The caller will outline the following:

- The purpose of the call
- Details of when the child has been late; reasons given for lateness and the times the child arrived
- A discussion to ascertain why this has been the case (and for children who come to Academy on their own, whether the adult is aware).
- A summary outlining why good punctuality is so important
- Offers of support
- Potential strategies to improve the situation

If a child has been late on **5 occasions**, they will receive a letter from the Attendance Officer. This letter should be sent as close to the incident of the 5<sup>th</sup> lateness as possible and at least within 48 hours (unless close to the end of the week). The letter will outline the following:

- The purpose of the letter
- Reference to the previous conversation that will have taken place
- Details of when the child has been late; reasons given for lateness; whether the child arrived alone or with an adult and the times the child arrived
- A detailed summary of why good punctuality is so important. This will include an outline of what the child misses every time they are late e.g., assemblies; phonics; reading lessons; as well as a general comment about the damaging impact on progress.
- Potential consequences if there is not an improvement e.g., Education Welfare Officer (EWO) involvement.
- Request to contact the Attendance Officer to arrange a meeting to look at strategies to support the situation.

If poor punctuality continues with no significant improvement over an agreed period of time, the Attendance Team will meet to discuss next steps which may include the following:

- Possible involvement from the EWO and/or Attendance Officer
- A further, more formal letter
- Meeting with the parent/carer and the Attendance Officer and/or the Principal.
- Early help support

### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend Academy does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the Academy will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the call is not answered, we will follow up with a text message to give parents chance to respond. If the Academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the Academy may ask the EWO to visit or contact the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the Academy will consider involving an EWO.

### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The Academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels using the electronic communication system. Parents can access up-to-date information regarding their child's attendance.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The Academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 full weeks' notice before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the academy office. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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

### **5.2 Legal sanctions**

The Academy or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from Academy, where the child is of compulsory Academy age.

From August 2024, the fine per parent for school absences will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision to issue a penalty notice will take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences
- 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 to prosecute.



A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during academy hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the academy has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

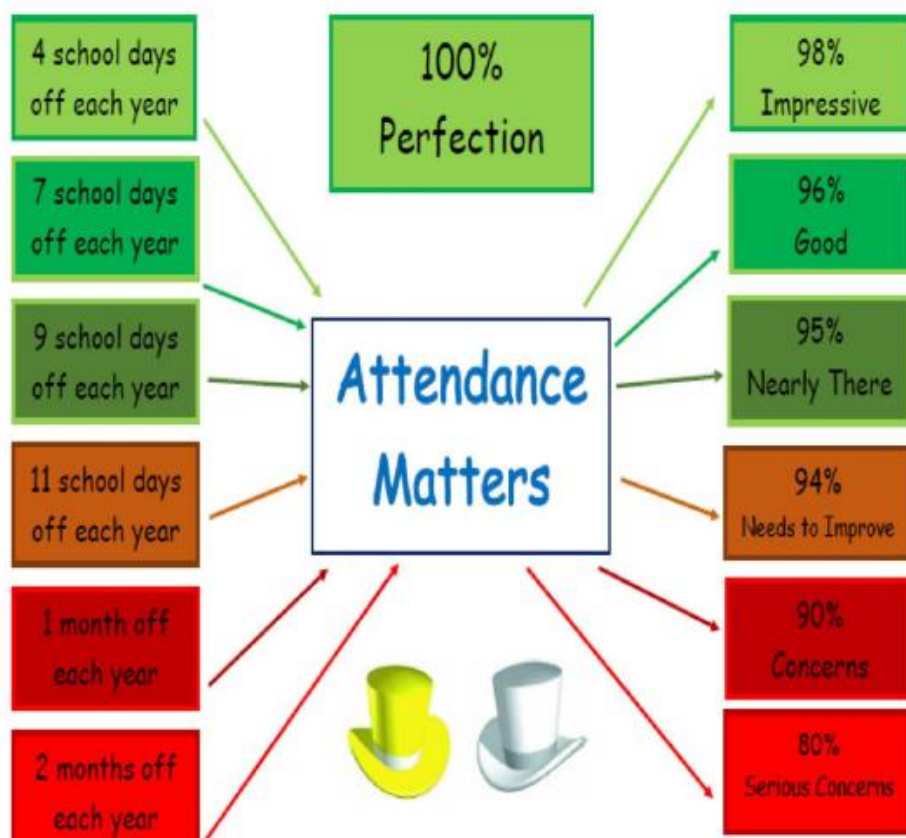
In these cases, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

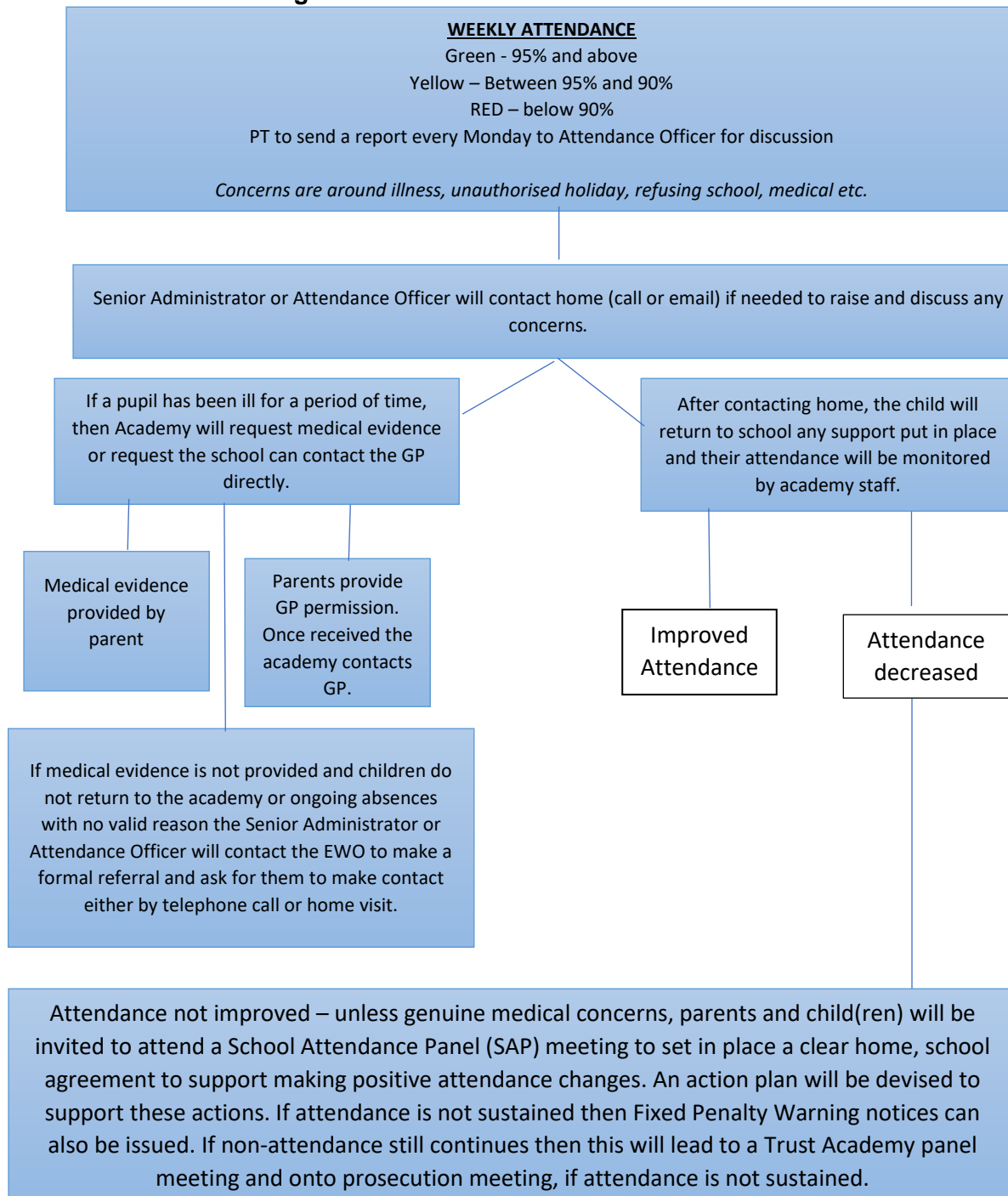
Attendance rewards are given through our system of 'Carrot Rewards' – this is part of a wider scheme, where pupils can receive prizes for the number of carrots they receive.

<b>Attendance</b>	100% attendance for a full half term	3 bonus carrots
	100% attendance for a full term	6 bonus carrots

Pupils also receive certificates each half term for their 100% attendance.



## 7. Attendance monitoring



### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the Academy and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's Academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying Academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The Academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance

The Academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other Academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

**Understanding absence percentages:** You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is 95%. This may make it easier to understand:

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks
90% equates to a day off every two weeks
85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks
80% equates to one whole day off every week
<b>A secondary age child whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school</b>

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of Academy, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of Academy.

The Academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the Academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at Academy
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

### First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the Academy if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. Parents are requested to inform the Academy before 8.30am if their child is too unwell to attend Academy. If the Academy does not receive notification, it will text/telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for Academy, but not arrived, as quickly as possible.

If the child is still too unwell to attend the following day, parents will need to telephone the Academy again before 8.30am to inform them of this second day of absence. If a child is absent for longer than 3 days due to ill health, medical evidence will need to be provided in order that the Academy can authorised the absence. On return to Academy, the parent must put in writing the reason for absence in addition to telephoning the Academy on the days of absence.

## **Continuing Absence Procedures**

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the Academy, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made, by the Education Welfare Officer, to ascertain the safety and well-being of the child and in addition to the reason for absence from Academy.

### **Ten days' absence**

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend Academy because of health needs.**

The EWO will work together with the Principal and the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or accumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home.

### **Part-time Timetables**

All pupils of compulsory Academy age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve Academy Attendance).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at Academy or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a Academy has agreed to a pupil being absent from Academy for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

### **Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures**

Regular monitoring of the registers will be made by the Attendance Improvement Coordinator, to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA). The Attendance Improvement Coordinator will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially the Academy will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the Academy to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an Attendance clinic with the Attendance Improvement Coordinator and relevant staff or outside professionals. However, if the pattern continues the Academy will make a referral to the Local Authority.

Parents/Carers of children whose attendance drops to below 90%, will receive a percentage information letter. In the event that there is then further absence from Academy, a letter to parents will now request that medical evidence is provided by the parent to enable the Academy to authorise any further absences due to ill health.

Further unauthorised absence will result in a parental meeting to allow a plan of support to encourage regular attendance. Further unauthorised absence or more unauthorised sessions where support is not successful, or not engaged with, will result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice/Court action.

### **Reluctant attenders/Academy refusal**

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be Academy-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the Academy at the earliest opportunity and the Academy will do everything possible to resolve. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse. Academy refusal/Academy phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine Academy phobia.

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the Academy, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- 1) The Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty. From August 2024, the fine for school absences will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.
- 2) The Local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
- 3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of every two years by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

### School Attendance Codes 2024

<b>Present Codes</b>	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
<b>Absent Codes</b>	
<b>Authorised Absences</b>	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)