

## Attendance Policy

### Summary

This policy document has been developed to ensure a consistent response to all students and families in our care in providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.



If you are unsure about the validity of the content of this policy please refer to the Policy Owner.

***Please Note: This policy is applicable to All Employees / Teachers / Support Staff / Volunteers including Trustees and Governors within the Group.***

Policy owner	<b>Board</b>
Policy holder	<b>Director of Education</b>
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### Approved by

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## 1. Rationale

Eastern Multi-Academy Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. This Policy has been developed in order to give a consistent response to all students and families in our care.

The Trust wants to do its best for all its young people and believes that regular attendance at the Academy is vital for children as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and in their friendships. Students should be at the Academy on time every day the Academy is open unless the reason is unavoidable. Permitting absence from the Academy without a good reason is an offence by a parent. The Trust will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach his/her full educational achievement, a high level of education attendance is essential. The Trust will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Attendance is subject to various education laws and this Policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the Trust academies will examine their attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets which will reflect both national and Trust attendance targets. The Trust and its academies will discuss their attendance figures and the success of this Policy on an annual basis and will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This document is the overarching principles with each academy having their own attendance policy that outlines the responsibilities of academy staff, children and parents in securing good attendance for all children. The local policy also outlines the procedures that each academy follows to support attendance as well as the key times for parents/carers to be aware of.

## 2. Procedures

Any student who is absent from the Academy at the morning or afternoon registration period **must** have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on his/her behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department for Education.

## 3. Lateness

The Trust academies set their own registration times dependent upon when they are open. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation such as delayed 'academy' transport. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Medical evidence may be requested to support the absence.

Students arriving after the start of 'academy' but before the end of the registration period will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late before registers close.

## 4. First Day Absence

On the first day of an absence, parents/carers should contact their child's academy before the registration period closes. If no contact has been made, the Academy will endeavour to contact parents/carers as quickly as possible during the 'academy' day and will transfer information to the registers, alerting the Principal or other key staff, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to any wellbeing issues.

If no contact is received from parents by the end of the morning of absence, the Academy will phone or text them. The Academy will continue to make daily contact until a response is received and will also make general enquires during this time and try other contact numbers.

Parents should contact the academy each day of absence to keep the academy informed as to the wellbeing of the child as well as ensuring the academy is aware of the likely length of any absence. The local policy will outline how contact should be made and to whom.

## 5. Ten Days' Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days will be notified to the relevant Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance staff for the local area. This is a legal requirement. The Academy will include details of the action they have taken.

## 6. Absence Notes

Notes of telephone calls received and written notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the child which may require further investigation the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. **Reasons for absence should provide as much detail as possible, for example: Chicken Pox and not simply ill.**

If there are attendance concerns about the child, further medical evidence must be produced (e.g. doctor's note, prescription, medicine label). **Principals retain the right to un-authorise absence without medical evidence.**

## 7. Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of all staff in each academy to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the Academy will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. Attendance is monitored regularly by Senior Leaders, Attendance Officers (where in post) and Safeguarding Leads. When a pupil's attendance falls lower than the national average or causes concern, parents will be contacted by the Academy. The Academy will look for patterns and reasons for absence, making parents aware of the number of absences and the importance of attendance etc.

Additional support may be available from outside agencies and in some cases the Academy will seek advice from the Attendance Improvement Officer. Action may include the use of the Fast Track system and/or Fixed Penalty Notices. Monitoring will continue and a Common Assessment Framework/Family Support Plan meeting could be considered.

## 8. Persistent Absence [PA]

All pupils whose attendance level falls below **95%** will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Academy's Attendance Officer. The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the child's attendance and details of systems such as Fast Track, Attendance Panels, and Family Support Processes utilised by the Academy.

PA is currently set at **90% (10 sessions in a six-week period)** therefore intervention should be happening well before attendance falls to this level.

A child's absence is deemed as severe should it fall to 50% or less. Academies will work with parents and external agencies to support persistently or severely absent children back into academy. Each academy outlines its approaches to supporting and securing good attendance for all children.

## 9. A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence, all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil receives help to catch up on missed work and is updated on any information which has been passed to other children.

## 10. Safeguarding

Attendance is an important element of Safeguarding and our academies will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. These measures are monitored as part of the trust's challenge and support to their academies.

Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. Academies should hold more than one contact number; this goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides academies with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing academy and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Academies should always follow-up any absences to ensure that the proper safeguarding action is taken.

DSLs should check the absence list on a daily basis to ensure that appropriate follow-up action can be taken where required.

**Parents should inform academies of a change of address, phone number or email address as soon as possible after the change is made. Ideally this should be done in writing.**

## 11. Promoting Attendance

The Eastern Multi-Academy Trust family of academies work actively together to improve attendance in our area and give consistent messages about the importance of good attendance. Each academy will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers of their responsibility to ensure that their children receive education and will make clear the links between attendance and attainment. Information about attendance, procedures and attendance rates is published in the Academy Prospectus. The Home/Academy Agreement mentions the importance of good attendance and the parents/carers' responsibility.

## 12. Attendance Awards

Academies will reward pupils who have good or improving attendance, in particular through praising the individual child and, for example, by awarding certificates for 100% attendance on a termly basis.

## 13. Holidays and absences (other than medical) in Term Time

Holidays during term time are not permitted **and will not be authorised**. Most other absences, unless medical in nature, are not permitted (see below, under Authorised Absences for possible exceptions). Parents will be reminded of the effect absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. Absences in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and parents must apply in writing in advance for permission. Further information can be found for Norfolk academies:

[Academy attendance - Norfolk County Council](#)

or for Suffolk academies:

[Academy attendance and penalty notices | Suffolk County Council](#)

*All academies can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from academy with permission. All academies are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the Academy Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and academies maintained by a local authority and special academies not maintained by a local authority must do so. These circumstances are:*

- *Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see Code C1)*
- *Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.*
- *Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.*
- *A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory academy age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and academy agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend academy as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable)*

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*Exceptional circumstances: All academies can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of academies maintained by local authorities and special academies not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Academies are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the academy to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from academy.*

*Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during academy hours."*

#### DfE Academy Attendance Guidance 2024

There is no complete definition of 'exceptional circumstances'. Each case is different and must be treated as such. Each application is individual to the pupil and it is for the Principal of the academy to come to a decision. The law tells us that even though a family may have one set of exceptional circumstances to be considered, the circumstances of each child must also be considered. Examples of exceptional circumstances could include a sudden **immediate** family bereavement, a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is unable to take leave at other times or a parent is employed by the emergency services and is required to work for a national event leading to leave being cancelled.

Should you request leave of absence for more than one child, at different academies, Principals/Principal are likely to discuss the application together and will attempt to reach one decision. Sometimes this involves academies outside of Eastern Multi-Academy Trust. Our Principals are expected to make the decision based on the child in **their** academy and the supporting evidence available. Our Principals cannot be held accountable for the decision taken by a Principal in another academy or academy.

In some Year groups, due to teacher and statutory assessments and controlled assignments, no absences will be authorised during certain periods, e.g. SATs and exam periods.

The academy will seek to respond to applications within five working days, though this is not always possible. Please remember that we must have sufficient advanced notice to consider applications. All absences taken without prior authorisation cannot be authorised after the event.

Should you not wish to accept the decision of the Principal, you may appeal to the governors in writing care of The Governance Professional to the Academy Committee at your child's academy. You should do this within 10 days of receipt of the academy's decision.

## 14. Categorisation of Absence

Any child who is on roll but not present in the Academy must be recorded within one of these categories.

### 1. **Unauthorised Absence**

Children where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

### 2. **Authorised Absence**

Children who are away from the Academy for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

Authorised absences include illness, religious observance, exclusions from academy and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. Medical or dental appointments may be authorised should there be no alternative times available, as may be the case with hospital appointments. However, routine check-ups or GP visits should take place outside academy hours where possible. Illness must be notified to the academy on the first morning. Medical notes may be requested if the absence is prolonged or recurring.

### 3. **Approved Educational Activity**

Supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the Academy. Children recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

If a child is receiving education off site or is attending at a academy/academy where they are dual registered, the Academy will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

## 15. The Registration System

Our Academies use a computerised system for maintaining attendance records (Pupil Asset in Primary Academies and Arbor ar KLA). The attendance codes defined by the Department for Education must be used to record attendance and absence in all EMAT academies. These can be found within the local policy.

## 16. Record Preservation

Academies must ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years.

## 17. Register Security





Registers or attendance marking sheets if used must be safely stored. Registers must not be left open on computers or tablets and should be treated securely following GDPR regulations.

## 18. Attendance Targets

The Trust academies will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a Senior Leader will be responsible for overseeing this work. Academies will make use of the attendance data available on the ASP (Analysing Academy Performance) system when setting its target. Targets will relate to national averages.


## 19. Governance

Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole academy approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge. Therefore, all trusts and governing bodies are expected to:

-  Recognise the importance of academy attendance and promote it across the academy's ethos and policies.
-  Ensure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
-  Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help academy leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
-  Ensure academy staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Multi-academy trust boards are expected to share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across academies.

## 20. Documents Used to Support this Policy:

-  [Working Together to Improve Academy Attendance \(2024\)  
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1099677/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

## Appendices

### The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory academy age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and [b] To any special needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at academy or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory academy age and are registered at academy is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend academy.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

### **Absences during Term Time**

Parents/carers are required under the Education Act (2006) to ensure their child attends the Academy regularly.

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments make clear that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Academies will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education or if the absences are during Academy exam periods and SATs.

Before applying parents/carers are advised to consider very seriously how the absences will affect their child's education. Academies are not obliged to provide work for children taking leave of absence, however some may choose to do this.

The Government states that any excessive absence or any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised on the child's records. Parents/carers need to be aware an accumulation of unauthorised absences will result in Penalty Notices or legal proceedings being taken.

## **Penalty Notices.**

Penalty Notices are fines of £80 to £160 imposed per parent per pupil. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child, of compulsory academy age, regularly attends the academy/academy where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

They can only be issued ~~by the Principal or someone authorised by and~~ through the Local Authority Officer or the police. All academies must send penalty notices to be issued to the Local Authority, and the police must send copies of penalties to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the Academy.

Penalties 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 five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the Academy at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

Parents are advised to discuss with the Academy any request for leave of absence prior to making any bookings. Our Academy's designated person is ultimately the Principal. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure confirmation is received from the Academy before the trip is taken and they do not assume permission is granted if written confirmation has not been received.

### **“Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences**

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in

respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- 🎯 The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil 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 issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- 🎯 A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

In cases where a pupil has moved academy or local authority area in the previous 3 years, an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. Where the pupil's previous academy was in the same local authority area this check will be simple. If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority(ies) is known they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years.

These checks can be made by the academy and/or local authority depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case."

### ***Working Together to Improve Academy Attendance (2024)***

## **Fast Track Process.**

### ***What is the purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?***

The purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with teachers, academy governors and Attendance Improvement Officers to identify the reasons for absence and to work together to improve attendance.

### ***What will happen at the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?***

The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered. A supportive action plan will be agreed. An attendance target will be set. Whilst the intention of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is that attendance will improve, consideration will be made to legal action if attendance targets are not met. This could include prosecution in the magistrates' court, education supervision orders or parenting orders.

### ***What happens next?***

A Review Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting will be arranged and at this meeting the action plan and attendance will be reviewed. A new action plan will be agreed. If the attendance target is met, the Review Panel can recommend that no further action is required. However, the academy will continue to monitor the attendance of your child and will notify the Local Education Authority if attendance deteriorates. This could still result in legal action being taken. If the attendance target is not met, the Review Panel will recommend to the Local Education Authority that legal action is taken as specified above: i.e. prosecution in the magistrate's court, an Education Supervision Order or Parenting Order.

### **Who is responsible for compliance of this policy?**

The Academy Council/Interim Executive Board is responsible for each academy's compliance with this policy and for the local Attendance Policy. Each Academy Council should provide appropriate challenge and support

around the current attendance, absence data (especially Persistent Absence) and the academy's actions to support good attendance of all pupils. Academy Council Members should pay particular attention to the attendance of vulnerable groups, especially disadvantaged, Looked After Children and SEND.

The local academy lead for attendance is responsible for reporting on attendance to the Academy Council or IEB.

The Principal is responsible for reporting on attendance to their Academy Council *through the Principal's Report and at each Challenge & Support Meeting. The Regional Directors/Directors of Education are responsible for offering appropriate challenge and support around the attendance data and for monitoring the effectiveness of the work of the academy in improving attendance for all children.*

The Academy Improvement Directors/Director of Education are responsible for reporting on attendance to the Board of trustees.

Model Local Policy to be used by all EMAT academies

# Attendance Policy Annex

[INSERT ACADEMY NAME]

ACADEMY  
LOGO

Approved by: [Name] Date: [Date]

Last reviewed on: [Date]

Next review due by: [Date]

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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to academy attendance through our whole-academy 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 academy attendance](#) 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 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the academy census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### 3.1 The Academy Committee

The Academy Committee 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

If you have a link governor for attendance, or a committee responsible for attendance, add details of their role in the monitoring of pupil attendance.

### 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 [insert name] and can be contacted via [telephone number and/or email address]

### 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/[role] (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is [insert name] and can be contacted via [telephone number and/or email address].

### 3.5 [Class teachers/form tutors]

[Class teachers/form tutors] are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the academy office [insert when this needs to be done, e.g. on the same day].

### 3.6 Academy [admin/office] staff

Academy [admin/office] staff will:

- › Take calls from parents [and pupils] about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system
- › Transfer calls from parents [and pupils] to the [head of year/pastoral lead] in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every [day/timetabled session] on time
- › Call the academy to report their child's absence before [time, e.g. 9am] on the day of the absence ([add if your academy expects this] 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:

- › [Primary academies] Attend academy every day on time
- › [Secondary academies] Attend every timetabled session 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:

- › [For pupils of compulsory academy age] 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 [time] on each academy day.

The register for the first session will be taken at [time] and will be kept open until [time – not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place]. The register for the second session will be taken at [time] and will be kept open until [time].

## 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 [time] or as soon as practically possible by calling the academy [admin/office] staff (see also section 7).

Add details of notification procedures for your academy.

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.

Add details of how parents should request leaves of absence.

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

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Add details of how your academy identifies and responds to ongoing punctuality issues.

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Adapt the following to match your academy's day-to-day process for following up on 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 academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the academy may [insert measures, e.g. contact 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 education welfare officer

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Adapt the following to explain when and how your academy reports to parents on their child's attendance record. The DfE expects you to do this regularly.

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels [for example, via half-termly written reports].

## 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as [add your academy's definition here].

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 [insert number of weeks] before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via [insert where parents can access the form]. 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, barges (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

You can add further examples here, for example:

- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the [Principal/head of academy] may grant term-time holiday
- Study leave
- Flexi-academying requests – your academy can add details of its procedures for requesting and deciding on this

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

#### Penalty Notices.

Penalty Notices are fines of £80 to £160 imposed per parent per pupil. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child, of compulsory academy age, regularly attends the academy/academy where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

They can only be issued through the Local Authority Officer or the police. All academies/academys must send penalty notices to be issued to the Local Authority, and the police must send copies of penalties to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.




Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the Academy.

Penalties 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 five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the Academy at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

Parents are advised to discuss with the Academy any request for leave of absence prior to making any bookings. Our Academy's designated person is ultimately the Principal. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure confirmation is received from the Academy before the trip is taken and they do not assume permission is granted if written confirmation has not been received.

### **“Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences**

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

-  The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil 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 issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
-  A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

In cases where a pupil has moved academy or local authority area in the previous 3 years, an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. Where the pupil's previous academy was in the same local authority area this check will be simple. If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority(ies) is known they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years.

These checks can be made by the academy and/or local authority depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case.”

### ***Working Together to Improve Academy Attendance (2024)***

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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The 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 or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Explain your academy's strategies for rewarding and improving attendance. For example, celebrating good attendance in assemblies or on displays.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

Explain how your academy monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. For example, how you tailor your approach to your context and the needs of particular cohorts of pupils.

### 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 each term 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/form tutors], 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

### 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

➤ Add anything else that is part of your strategy

Explain any other procedures your academy has for targeting unauthorised absence. For example – meetings, letters, closer monitoring.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum [insert frequency] by [name/job title of individual]. 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.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives 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 a 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 a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the academy
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	Academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	Academy is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at academy after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in academy	Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the academy
<b>#</b>	Planned academy closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day