



# Attendance Policy Annex

Southery Academy



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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school 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 school

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](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school 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 school 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 school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Emily Petto is the link governor for attendance. Termly meetings are held with the attendance team, she will then report back to the Academy Committee.

### 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 school
- 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 **Louise Shanks** she can be contacted via calling the school office on 01377 377205, or emailing [louise.shanks@soa.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:louise.shanks@soa.eastern-mat.co.uk)

### 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 school 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/Pastoral support/Attendance Officer (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officers are Lucy Short and can be contacted via 01366 377205, [lucy.short@soa.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:lucy.short@soa.eastern-mat.co.uk) and Lindzi Morgan who can be contacted via 01945 583885, [lindzi.morgan@ema.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:lindzi.morgan@ema.eastern-mat.co.uk)

### 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 school office, this needs to be completed by 9.10 am and 1.30 pm.

### 3.6 Academy office staff

**Academy office 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 the attendance officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance, if needed

### 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 10.00 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, unless previously agreed, 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 the 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 school 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 school 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 school by 8.45 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 am and will be kept open until 9.15 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00 pm and will be kept open until 1.30 pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 10.00 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the academy office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school 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 with 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 if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Leave of Absence should be requested by completing a Leave Form. A parent may also bring in a copy of the medical appointment letter to the office.

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 the 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 school 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

Parents are required to sign their child in if arriving late through the front office, giving the full reason. This will be recorded on the MIS.

Late slips are handed out daily to any child who more than 20 minutes late. Persistent lateness results in a letter being sent home detailing the number of times they have been late, and the number of minutes learning time the pupil has lost. The letter also offers for the parents to come in and to speak with the Attendance officers, to discuss if there is a problem preventing pupils coming in on time.

If the late arrivals persists, parents will be invited into the academy.

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

First day calling takes place. If a child does not attend and we do not have a reason why, the academy will call the parent, if they do not answer, we will then call everyone on the emergency contact list, until we get a reply.

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the academy may, telephone the attendance team, and make a home visit.
- 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 school will consider involving an education welfare officer

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Letters are sent out half termly, telephone calls are made home, parents are invited in for a meeting to discuss attendance. Discussions take place at parent consultations.

# 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 a family wedding or funeral, or what the Principal deems exceptional.

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 before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or the school 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 school 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 school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

### Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of £80 - £160, 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 Office 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.

**A penalty notice** is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behavior without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviors, 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 have 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 changed 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

Weekly: We have a weekly assembly congratulating the class with the highest attendance for that week, they then hold the Attendance Trophy for the coming week.

Monthly: Attendance data for each class the whole school is put onto the monthly newsletter.

Monthly: Update celebration board

Termly: Certificates are given out to 100% attendance and over 97% attendance for that term.

Yearly: Pupils who have 100% attendance for the academy year receive a 100% attendance pin badge to wear, receive a certificate, and a letter is sent home to their parents thanking them for their contribution towards the school's attendance.

Celebration Dojo messages.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

On a daily basis, the attendance is checked by the Attendance Officer and the Family Support Officer. The two work closely together, daily they have informal discussions on any concerns, or potential concerns they may have. The 2 staff members meet formally every 2 weeks, discuss and record any concerns and actions they have. If any concerns arise during the daily discussions, action will be taken immediately. Meetings can be arranged with parents, phone calls made home, letters sent out, or teacher meetings arranged.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data every 2 weeks, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether 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 school absence national statistics releases. The underlying academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school 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 school 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 school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

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 school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by **Lucy Short, Attendance Officer** and **Lindzi Morgan, Family Support Officer**. 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 school 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 school
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 school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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	School 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 school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<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	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School 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 school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day