



## Trust Student Attendance Policy V.1.1

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Responsible for this policy:	Deputy Heads for Student Wellbeing

## Approval History

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Policy Committee	09.06.17	V1.0	

## Revision History

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Rev	Summary of Changes	Changes Marked	Owner/Editor
14.06.17			Amendments made following Policy Cttee		JFA/SME

## **1.0 Purpose of this Policy**

This policy seeks to set out:

- Staff responsibilities for the promotion of good attendance levels amongst students; and
- The procedures the Education and Leadership Trust applies to all attendance matters.

## **2.0 Legal Requirements**

Schools are required to be open for 190 days in an academic year or 380 (half day) sessions by the Education (School Day and School Year) Regulations 1999.

## **3.0 Aims and Principles**

- Daily, punctual attendance to school is the key to students achieving their full academic potential.
- Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend the school every day it is open.
- The school works in partnership with parents/carers and liaises closely with other service providers to produce systematic and coordinate responses to attendance issues.
- Early intervention is vital to avoid students developing poor attendance patterns.

## **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Board of Governors**

- Monitors the effective implementation of the Attendance Policy.
- Scrutinises attendance reports from the Headteacher on a regular basis.

### **4.2 Parents and Carers**

- Are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school each day, arriving at 8.15am to ensure that they are seated in their form room or in assembly by 8.30am.
- Call the school by 8.30am at the latest on each day their child is absent, stating the reason for the absence and likely duration. On the day a student returns to school the parent/carer must send a written note to the Attendance Team to confirm the cause of absence. Without a signed and dated note from a parent or carer

a student's absence will remain 'unauthorised' in the school register.

- Are legally responsible for informing the school that their child will be leaving the school. Parents/Carers are asked to give at least two weeks written notice of a child leaving school.

#### **4.3 The Headteacher**

- Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Attendance Policy.
- Promotion, celebration and rewarding of high attendance rate.
- Ensures improved attendance is a key element of the Trusts School Improvement Plan.
- Considers regular reports from the Assistant Headteacher on attendance and absence patterns and trends.
- Regularly reports to the Board of Governors on attendance matters.
- Acts as a signatory for attendance related legal proceedings.
- Scrutinises and makes decisions about the following matters when they affect students' attendance: exclusions, sporting activities, holiday requests, off-site education provision, part-time timetables (as part of reintegration or transition), religious observance, Traveller absence, forced and partial closure, study leave, student review days, work experience, medical matters or any exceptional circumstances.

#### **4.4 Deputy Head for Student Wellbeing**

- Strategic responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Attendance Policy.
- Monitoring the development, implementation, evaluation and review of the school's Attendance Policy.
- Overseeing the promotion, celebration and rewarding of good attendance.
- Monitoring the introduction of effective systems to reduce absenteeism.
- Responsibility for the authorisation of the 'C' absence code.

#### **4.5 The Assistant Headteacher**

- Responsible for the development, implementation, evaluation and

review of the school's Attendance Policy.

- Oversees the promotion, celebration and rewarding of good attendance.
- Ensures the introduction of effective systems to reduce absenteeism.
- Leads and manages the Attendance Team
- Ensures that all staff communicate effectively with each other to ensure high levels of attendance, in particular; Pastoral Managers, Heads of House, Heads of Progress/Directors of Progress, House Coordinators, Attendance Team, Administrative Team, Inclusion Team, Form Tutors, Learning Coaches and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ensures the effective delivery of attendance initiatives and campaigns across the school.
- Ensures that the governing body, teachers, parents and students are fully informed of attendance patterns and trends and what they need to do to ensure good levels of attendance.
- Coordinating initiatives to re-engage students returning from absences of varying lengths.

### **Operationally the Assistant Headteacher will:**

#### **Daily**

- Scrutinise attendance data and coordinate the school's response to patterns and trends at individual and group levels.
- Liaise with the Attendance Team, Pastoral Managers, Inclusion Team, SLT, Directors of Learning/Directors of Progress and form tutors to ensure high levels of attendance.

#### **Weekly**

- Meet with Attendance Officer to ensure all relevant procedures have been implemented, targeted students are being monitored, actions to improve attendance are being implemented and resolve related issues or problems.
- Provide the SLT, Directors of Learning/Directors of Progress, Heads of House, Pastoral Managers and the Inclusion Team with a detailed profile of attendance across years, houses and forms.

## **Half Termly**

- Provide the SLT and Governors with a detailed profile of attendance across years, houses and forms and student groups (SEN, FSM, Ethnic Minorities, and LAC).

### **4.6 Attendance Officer / Attendance Manager / Student Services Manager**

- Is responsible for the operational implementation of the Attendance Policy.
- Liaises with the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Attendance, House Co-ordinators, Pastoral Managers, Heads of House, Administration Team and relevant outside agencies to ensure effective implementation of the school's Attendance Policy.
- Ensures the completion of all procedures relating to absence and lates, including sending text messages using SIMS InTouch by 10am, collating messages regarding absences and making calls to parents/carers where no reason for absence has been communicated.
- To support Pastoral Managers, House Co-ordinators, Heads of House and Inclusion Team with required attendance data and related information.
- To be the first point of contact for parents and pupils relating to attendance and punctuality.
- To be responsible for ensuring accurate lesson registers are taken each form and lesson and that agreed register and related attendance routines and procedures are followed by all teachers.
- To process and collate letters regarding attendance as required in conjunction with attendance team.
- Organise and deliver a regular cycle of training for school and key stakeholders e.g. new teachers and support staff, Governors, etc. on regulations, legislation, best practice guidelines, and LA processes.
- Collates, analyses and produces pupil attendance data, identifying patterns and trends, and reports to inform future service delivery and strategic direction to improve attendance in school.
- To co-ordinate, plan and carry out home visits, including cold calling, lone visits and joint visits with other appropriate services e.g. Pastoral Managers, Police, Health, Social Care and Caseworker.
- Assist SLT to make decisions on a case by case basis as to the most appropriate course of action.

- Assist SLT in monitoring and enforcing attendance parenting orders and undertaking casework in line with post- prosecution guidelines.
- Manage a caseload and ensure casework and documentation is prepared and collated to support legal sanctions, and to present in court.
- To support Heads of Progress/Directors of Progress and House Co-ordinators/Heads of House with the promotion, celebration and rewarding of good attendance across the school.
- Responsible for ensuring that attendance systems operate effectively and are able to provide accurate, timely data.
- Responsible for supporting the Admin staff over technical and operational matters regarding SIMs and other Attendance Information Systems.
- Ensuring that accurate data is correctly transmitted to external agencies, including the LA and DFE.
- Ensure that the Attendance Team has access to appropriate data on lesson attendance and that it responds effectively to it.
- Responsible for ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of attendance data captured by SIMs.

### **Weekly**

- Meet with Attendance Officer to ensure all relevant procedures have been implemented, targeted students are being monitored, actions to improve attendance are being implemented and resolve related issues or problems.
- Provide the SLT, Directors of Learning, Heads of House, Pastoral Managers and the Social Inclusion Team with a detailed profile of attendance across years, houses and forms.

### **Half Termly**

- Provide the SLT and Governors with a detailed profile of attendance across years, houses and forms and student groups (SEN, FSM, Ethnic Minorities, and LAC).

### **Operationally the Attendance Officer/Manager will:**

#### **Daily:**

- Ensure that all relevant actions are completed as outlined in Section 5.8 of this policy: ***'Escalation Procedures for Tackling Absence and Poor Punctuality'***

- Check attendance of students educated off-site.

**Weekly:**

- Send letters to parents for pupils falling below identified trigger points for intervention.
- Send letters to parents for pupils persistently arriving late to school.

**Ongoing:**

- Follow up students who received attendance letter, check if their attendance has improved.
- Update registers with any information received back regarding the above.
- Upon receipt of Holiday Request form, check that form is fully completed and has been seen by the Headteacher. Ensure appropriate response is sent to parent/carer.
- Ensure that students' register records are updated with the appropriate codes.
- Ensure tutors and subject teachers complete student attendance registers using the correct codes and communicating with Attendance Team regarding future, current and past absences.

**As necessary:**

- Consult school calendar each week to anticipate any requirements for paper registers and communicate with relevant staff to ensure smooth implementation of these. Update SIMs once paper registers have been submitted to Attendance Team.
- Provide all relevant data requested by Senior Leadership Team.
- Contact parents regarding their child's attendance and where necessary work with them to effect an improvement.
- To maintain duplicate copies of form group registers along with up to date absence records in case of an emergency evacuation of the building.

**4.7 Senior House Lead / Heads of House will:**

- Ensure that the school's Student Attendance Policy is fully implemented within every form in each House.
- Work with the Heads of House and Form Tutors to help organise House and Form events to improve attendance and punctuality.

- Liaise with the Attendance team, Heads of Houses and Pastoral Managers to ensure identified students and their families are worked with effectively to improve students' attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that information on noticeboards, plasma screens, website etc. with regard to attendance and punctuality are up to date and accurate.
- Scrutinise attendance data and lead the response to patterns and trends at House and Form levels, by developing House Attendance Action Plans.
- Challenge and hold to account Heads of House on the quality and accuracy of their forms' registers and the impact of actions implemented to improve students' attendance.
- Ensure that Attendance is a standing item on all Head of House meetings, to review attendance by year, forms and individuals.
- Meet with Attendance Team to discuss attendance issues and progress.

#### **4.8 Heads of Houses**

- To promote, celebrate and reward good attendance via the agreed, whole school schemes.
- Responsible for leading and supporting their tutor teams on attendance issues.
- Work with Assistant Headteacher, Senior House Lead/Heads of House, Pastoral Managers and Attendance Officer in response to data provided and keeping the Attendance Team informed of student attendance issues raised by tutors.
- Communicate attendance interventions to tutors and support the dissemination of attendance information to tutees.

#### **Operationally, the Heads of House will:**

##### **Weekly:**

- Scrutinise attendance data across their House.
- Ensure that correct procedures are followed by tutors, in particular unauthorised absences, and ensure tutors are collecting notes from parents regarding absences and that these are passed to the Attendance Team.
- Celebrate best tutor group and improvement in groups and individuals through House assemblies.

##### **Monthly:**

- Scrutinise attendance across their House and ensure that appropriate strategies are being deployed across the team and that correct systems and procedures are being followed.

**As necessary:**

- Through celebration assemblies (Christmas, Easter and end of year) celebrate individual and House achievements in attendance.
- Ensure that tutors refer attendance issues in the correct format and in a timely fashion.

**Ongoing:**

- Ensure that attendance is a standing item at House meetings.
- Ensure that the links between achievement and attendance are emphasised to tutors and tutees.
- Ensure that form tutors are monitoring tutee attendance on a daily basis and presenting weekly attendance figures provided by Heads of House.

**4.9 Form Tutors Will:**

- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance.
- Act as first point of contact over issues of attendance.
- Complete their form's AM register and review the full register of each student on a daily basis.
- Work closely with students and their families to challenge poor attendance and encourage good attendance.
- Work closely with Heads of House and the Inclusion Team, referring issues at the appropriate time and way.
- To monitor the attendance of individuals and the whole tutor group and to respond appropriately to related issues.

**Operationally Form Tutors will:**

**Daily:**

- Take accurate SIMs registers within **5 minutes** of the start of the form period. Subject tutors to **ONLY** use the following codes: Present ( / ); No

explanation provided ('N'); or Late ('L' – and recording the number of minutes late).

- Check pupil attendance to all lessons and follow up internal truancy with phone calls home and sanctions decided in discussion with the Pastoral Manager/Head of House
- Send notes from parents about students attendance to the Attendance Team so reasons for absence can be recorded.

#### **Weekly:**

- Inform Pastoral Manager and relevant Director of Learning/Director of Progress and Heads of House about students missing registration and patterns of poor attendance.
- In response to poor attendance to school or lessons, follow-up with tutees and if necessary parent/carers.
- Update the pupil attendance displays in the form's base.
- Contact parents as necessary to alert them to developing attendance problems and trends, in liaison with the Attendance Officer.

#### **As Necessary:**

- Contact parents over concerns regarding attendance.
- Set improvement targets for poor attenders.
- Use tutor time to emphasise the direct link between attendance and achievement.
- Ensure that students returning from a range of absences are quickly and effectively reintegrated back into both the tutor group, classes and wider school life.

#### **4.10 Subject Teachers**

- To promote and celebrate the importance of good attendance to school.
- Responsible for maintaining accurate records of attendance to lessons using the agreed procedures.
- Work closely with Pastoral Managers and Directors of Learning on issues of attendance to lessons. For example, strategies to deal with truancy from lessons or support for students who have returned after a significant period of absence.

**Operationally, Subject Teachers will:**

**Each lesson:**

- Take accurate SIMs registers within **5 minutes** of the start of every lesson. Subject tutors to **ONLY** use the following codes: Present ( / ); No explanation provided ('N'); or Late ('L' – and recording the number of minutes late).
- Re-open registers as necessary when students appear part-way through lessons.

**Daily:**

- Report any technical issues or problems regarding SIMS registers to the SIMs Manager.

**Weekly:**

- Inform Subject Leader of any problems or patterns emerging regarding either group or individual attendance.

**As necessary:**

- Emphasise the direct link between attendance and performance and achievement.
- Welcome back students from significant absence and ensure that they are able to access current work and are able to catch up on previous work.

### PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

#### AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

The school decides when an absence is authorised / unauthorised. A telephone call or letter from parents/carers does not in itself authorise an absence; only the Academy's acceptance of the explanation offered by authorises the absence.

The following explains why absences are recorded as authorised or unauthorised:

##### **Authorised Absences**

- Sickness.
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointment.
- Days of religious observance such as key religious festivals (agreed with Headteacher beforehand)
- Exceptional family circumstances, for example, a bereavement.

##### **Unauthorised Absences**

- Shopping for shoes, uniform or any items.
- Looking after parents, brothers, sisters or family members unwell. Unless an unavoidable emergency when one or two half-day sessions may be authorised.
- Minding the house.
- Birthdays, including parties or treats.
- Staying at home to be with visiting relatives.
- Family Holidays – unless agreed as a holiday by the Headteacher beforehand.
- Medical/dental appointments – these should be made outside school hours.

##### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

This will only be allowed during term time in very exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher. In such instances, a Leave of Absence Request Form should be submitted to the Headteacher at least 10 days before the leave of absence and the Headteacher will respond. If a student is absent due to an unauthorised leave of absence then a request to the Local Authority for a penalty notice to be issued may be made and the parents/carers may each receive a fine of £120. If leave of absence is not applied for the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will also be considered for statutory action

The process for parents / carers seeking authorisation of a term time holiday will be:

1. Leave of Absence Request form issued and on its return is passed to the Attendance Officer/Attendance Manager.
2. Attendance Officer/Attendance Manager to scrutinise attendance and previous holidays that year and this information will then be passed to the Headteacher.
3. The Headteacher will make a judgment and request that the appropriate response is sent by the Attendance Officer/Attendance Manager to the parent/carer.

During the final examination period in year 11, all students are required to attend school every day. On the day of their examination, each student will receive full attendance marks if they attend their examination and revision session that day. In consultation with the headteacher, specific students may be placed on individual revision timetables.

## **MISSING CHILDREN**

### ***Statutory Responsibilities***

It is the duty of all who work in the education service to secure the safety of children in their charge.

Deletion of a student from the school roll must follow strict guidelines and procedures as detailed below. Where a child is known to be moving, the Secretary of State would expect staff at the initial school to establish the name and address of the ongoing school, also the start date. This should be confirmed by contact between the schools – either written, or orally when the pupil file is requested.

If any professional has good reason to suspect that a crime against a child may have been committed they should contact the police directly.

## **MULTI-AGENCY PROTOCOL**

Where a child is withdrawn or “disappears”, the Headteacher and agencies involved with the school or young person must make every effort to gain information at the earliest opportunity. This may include the Police or Children’s Services. Factors in assessing risk are length of absence, level of concern and level of perceived risk to the pupil.

Even without specific concerns liaison must be sought between the school and agencies who may have contact or information. All cases must automatically be considered for referral to Children’s Services (who may refer on to the Police).

It may be appropriate for agencies to approach possible sources of information such as relatives or neighbours.

In cases where concern is specific, action to gain information and alert agencies and/or Police must be swift in order to protect vulnerable parties.

Such concerns may include:

- A record of poor attendance
- Evidence of poor or inappropriate parenting
- Child's health/general development
- Certain categories of special educational need
- Child and/or siblings on the Child Protection Register - unexplained, continued absence of any child on the Child Protection Register must automatically be treated as high priority.

## **REMOVALS FROM ADMISSIONS REGISTER**

The following information is to be used as a guide when considering whether students should be removed from the school's roll.

Schools should always use **extreme caution** when making a decision to remove, and consults with the local authority if in any doubt.

**It is vital for child protection reasons that children do not 'disappear' from the system.** If a child has not been admitted to another school and is removed from the last school roll they can slip through the safety net.

If a child is not on a school roll the LA cannot prosecute for non-attendance.

This guidance has been devised in accordance with the 1995 Pupil Registration Regulations and the Amendments contained in the 1997 Regulations.

The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admission register:

1. Permanent Exclusion: where the school's Discipline Committee have upheld a decision to permanently exclude and either the 15 day appeal limit has expired, the parent has notified the school in writing that they do not intend to appeal or if the parent has appealed and the decision of the Appeal Panel upholds the decision of the school's Discipline Committee.
2. After 4 weeks continuous absence as a direct result of a final detention, Court Order or Order of Recall. (This does **not** include the issuing of a Parenting Order or an Education Supervision Order for non-attendance).
3. Where a parent makes a **formal** written request to the Headteacher and the LA to educate their child 'otherwise than at school'. (This is **not** the same as a parent withdrawing a child from the school due to a decision made by the school that they are at odds with).

4. Where a child has been certified by a doctor or health professional as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend the school.
5. When a child, for whatever reason, leaves to attend another school. Written confirmation that the child has attended and gone on to another school roll **must** be obtained before removal.
6. This is also the case where the LA 'names' another school in Part IV of a pupil's Statement of Special Educational Need. Confirmation that the pupil has been admitted must be obtained before removal.

In all of these six instances the pupil before removal will have been confirmed to be on another school or LA roll thus ensuring the safe passage of children between schools. If confirmation has not been obtained by the school that the pupil is on another school or LA roll, then they cannot be removed from the roll.

The following three situations require both the LA and the school to complete a Thorough investigation before the pupil is removed from the admissions register:

1. The pupil has ceased to attend and no longer lives at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school.
2. In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday and that pupil has failed to attend the school within ten school days immediately following the agreed return date and this is not due to sickness or unavoidable absence.
3. That a pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than two weeks and the school and LA are unable to locate the pupil.

In all three of these cases the LA must be informed of these pupils as the LA tracking procedures must be implemented. Only when the LA is satisfied all efforts have been made to locate a pupil can they be removed from an admissions register. The school can take the pupil off roll after 10 days of their non-attendance. They must inform the LA that they are doing this through the CME process.

### **CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**

It is recognised that there are particular problems attached to the underachievement of Children Looked After (CLA).

As a starting point the collection of accurate data is vital if planning for these vulnerable pupils is to be effective and targeted. Attendance data of all looked after children will be collected by the LA from schools. LA will use a private company to check daily on the attendance of CLA. Any unexplained absence will be followed up by telephone call from the private company looking for an explanation for absence or the school's efforts in finding why the student is absent. They will expect to be advised of strategies and provision put in place for LAC with continued unauthorised absence. It is necessary for the school's Attendance Officer to be able to differentiate between actual unauthorised absence and internal truancy.

It is expected that there will be regular and open communication between the schools designated CLA teacher/officer, Social Services and other relevant parties.

The attendance of CLA must be given high priority, with school, support staff, partner agencies and One Education giving priority to monitoring their attendance data. Flexible and creative approaches, with particular attention to transitional phases are of the utmost importance. Early intervention is vital to resolve attendance difficulties at the earliest stage.

Early intervention, following indicators of change or problems are vital and the school will be expected to identify this and respond by swift information-seeking, planning and action. Where appropriate, other involved parties should be involved in the early discussions and reactions/responses.

First concerns must also be passed on, with action plans or responsive measures to ensure ongoing communication and a unity of response. The level of communication with the home placement at this stage may also prove paramount to change.

The use of rewards and congratulations for improved attendance cannot be over-emphasised.

Where exclusion occurs the school has a responsibility under social inclusion guidance to ensure that all parties are fully aware of appropriate procedures, rights and responsibilities. It is likely that any CLA's social worker will require advocacy in such situations.

### **PENALTY NOTICES (PN)**

A Penalty Notice (PN) may be issued where a student has an unacceptable level of unauthorised absences i.e. 5 or more unauthorised absences.

PN's may be issued when:

- a) A parent has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation;
- b) In cases where students are persistently late for school after the register has closed;
- c) In cases where a student's parent(s) fail to work with the school to improve attendance (and the 5 unauthorised absences criteria is met);
- d) The Police during the course of their enquiries may also make a request to the Local Authority for the issuing of a PN if the student has been identified as truanting. The Local Authority will investigate the circumstances before a decision is made;
- e) PNs may be issued to any or all parents as defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996

Parent/Carers will not be issued with more than two separate PNs per child in any twelve-month period.

A written warning of the possibility of a PN being issued will be sent to the Parent/Carer advising of the number of absences.

There is no limit to the number of warning letters that may be issued.

If attendance does not improve over the fifteen-day warning period then a PN may be issued by the Local Authority if the absence of pupils meets the criteria.

Payment is £60 if made within 21 days of issue or £120 if paid within 28 days of issue. Payment in full discharges the parent/carer's liability. However, prosecution may be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the PN (a minimum of three months evidence is required after the Penalty Notice has been paid).

If full payment is not received the LA is required under the Education Act 1996 to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of the student's poor attendance.

## **PROSECUTION OF PARENTS/CARERS**

If Unauthorised Absences are in line with the Local Authority's guidance, the Attendance team will prepare and submit Section 9 legal documents to the Local Authority who will advise the Trust school on whether it is in the public interest to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

When the Local Authority authorises a prosecution the Attendance team will ensure that all evidence is compiled in accordance with Local Authority guidance.

Depending on the nature of the case the Attendance Manager/Officer and other members of staff may be required to attend court as witnesses.

Where a parent/carer has received a penalty notice previously and there are further unauthorized absences, the Attendance Team will submit Section of legal documents to the Local Authority who will advise the school on whether it is in the public interest to commence proceedings in the Magistrate's Court.