

# Attendance Policy



**Document Title:** Attendance Policy

**Policy Status:** Active

**Date of Issue:** December 2022

**Date to be revised:** July 2024

## 1. The importance of excellent attendance

The Academy has a statutory responsibility to ensure that every child on-roll is safe by recording their daily attendance at morning and afternoon registration and monitoring their physical and emotional well-being during the day.

All children have the right to access education every day of the academic year. This enables them to believe, achieve and succeed in all aspects of academy life. Positive life outcomes are fundamentally linked to excellent attendance and punctuality.

All parents or carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. It is an offence in law to permit absence without good reason and may result in prosecution under the **Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003** and under **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

### 2.1 The Academy will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Roll Call/Registration procedures and receive appropriate professional development with regard to these.
- Complete Roll Call accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, including registration during every lesson of the day.
- Emphasis to parents/carers the importance of contacting the academy on the first day of absence, and provide effective mechanisms for them to contact the academy.
- Promote the importance that full attendance and punctuality play in achieving the best possible educational outcomes.
- Promote race, disability and gender equality within all practices and procedures related to attendance and punctuality.
- Through consultation days and reporting systems, ensure that parents, carers and students are made aware of the attendance pattern and provide an opportunity to discuss how it may affect learning and offer supportive strategies to improve attendance.
- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued.
- Support students who have difficulty accessing education through the work of the academy support, Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer and Local authority, Early Help, Attendance service.
- Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.

### 2.2 Parents/Carers will:

- Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.
- Parents/Carers and students should be aware of the academy times to ensure punctuality. These can be found on the academy website.
- Contact the school whenever the student is absent on the first day and on each day after, of absence.
- Provide proof of medical appointments and medical treatment if required to do so by the academy.
- Avoid removing their child during the academy day.
- Attend attendance meetings with members of staff from the Academy when requested in order to put in place strategies to improve attendance.

### 3. Attendance Procedures

#### 3.1 Roll Call (AM/PM marks)

- The statutory recording of attendance and absence at the start of each session (am/pm) is known as Roll Call. This is undertaken within the first 30 minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions. Wherever possible this Roll Call is taken 'electronically' by register calling.
- The recording of attendance and absence to all other lessons will be known as Registration. Designated staff will be reminded of their legal duty to complete and submit Roll Call within ten minutes of a lesson starting, and using the correct registration codes.
- The accuracy of registration will be monitored by the Attendance Officer, and any issues will be addressed and followed up.

#### 3.2 Informing the Academy of Absence

If a child is absent Parents/Carers must:

- Contact the Attendance line phone prior to 8.15am on the first day of absence, advising of the reason and likely length of absence. Parents or carers should continue to inform the Academy on each subsequent day of absence.
- Provide proof of medical appointments and medical treatment if required to do so by the Academy. Wherever possible, all medical appointments should be taken outside of school time. Medical evidence can be attached as a photograph, or photocopy, of:
  - a. letter from medical professional
  - b. appointment card with name date and time
  - c. copy of prescription note
  - d. copy of prescribed medication sticker on side of medicine packaging
- Request a discussion/meeting with the Attendance Advisory Officer to discuss extended absence due to illness or if there are any other concerns affecting school attendance.

#### 3.3 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised Absences could lead to a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service and/or a prosecution or instant fine under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Please note that we will only authorise 5 days of illness per academic year. Any further absences due to illness will only be authorised once medical documentation is provided. For example, a GP appointment card/letter/text or prescribed medicine labels. We understand the difficulty of obtaining same-day GP appointments, however, there are a number of walk-in clinics in the area who will provide confirmation of emergency appointment attendance. Absence will be deemed unauthorised where:

- Parents or carers do not provide medical evidence to support absence due to ill health
- Parents or carers remove pupils from school for holidays or trips (leave of absence) during term time
- Pupils arrive at the Academy after the registration period has ended unless there are agreed arrangements in place.
- Parents or carers keep children from the Academy unnecessarily
- Parents or carers do not communicate the reason for absence to the Academy
- A pupil truants- where they are absent without the parents' or carers' knowledge

Holidays in term time will never be authorised. The Academy is closed for 14 weeks a year when parents can take holidays and travel abroad. Where there is an exceptional and immediate circumstance (such as a death in the family but not family weddings or such events) where a pupil will need to be absent during term time, a request can be made to the Principal in writing or via email who will then consider the application and respond in writing. The Principal's decision is final.

### **3.4 Punctuality**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. When a pupil starts the day late, this has a negative impact on their learning, the learning of others and encourages a culture of poor punctuality across the academy. Where pupils are late to the Academy with no valid reason the following punctuality protocols will be followed:

- The Academy day starts at 8.20am and we expect pupils to be through the gate and on their way to their morning registration lined up by 8.25am.
- Any pupil who arrives after 8.30am, will access the site via reception. They will be met by the Attendance Manager who will automatically record the pupil as having unauthorised lateness and a 30 minute same day lunchtime detention will be issued.
- Persistent lateness can lead to a meeting with the Attendance Advisory Officer and a court referral being processed.
- Poor punctuality is classed as irregular Academy attendance and is dealt with accordingly. This may mean that parents or carers could face the possibility of legal action.
- If you know your child is going to be late for a specific reason please call the Academy before 8:25am, following the same procedures for absence.

### **4. Leaving Site During the Day**

Pupils are not to leave site during the school day, except in exceptional circumstances:

- In case of medical need, in the first instance the pupil should seek medical attention from our on-site first aider. This is done by informing a member of staff that they require medical attention, which will be followed up via the On Call/First Aid systems. With permission, a pupil may take time out of a lesson (in a designated area) to see if their condition improves. The first aider may feel that it is not appropriate for the child to be in the Academy due to poor health and will refer the pupil to the Attendance Manager.
- The Attendance Manager or a member of the Leadership Team will contact parents or carers to gain permission to send the pupil home, in some cases the parent will be required to collect their child from the Academy.
- Pupils must not contact parents during the Academy day and request collection or permission to leave.
- Prior to leaving the Academy site, all pupils must report to reception and be officially signed out. If Parents/Carers are unable to collect their child and they are of secondary school age, and have given verbal permission for the pupil to leave the Academy, they will confirm that the pupil has permission to leave the site.
- Post 16 pupils who wish to leave the site during the Academy day must adhere to the signing out procedures determined by the Assistant Principal for EA6.

## **5. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring of attendance is systematic and rigorous to ensure there is a strategic approach to improving a pupil's attendance where it is below expectations and impacting on their progress:

- Academy attendance data will be published for consideration at every Academy board meeting. It may also be submitted to the Trust Academies Standards Committee as required.
- Attendance Data will be produced regularly and distributed to the Senior Leadership Team and College Teams to enable interventions to occur.
- A Senior Leader has overall responsibility for the publication and monitoring of the attendance data for the whole Academy.
- Attendance data will be collected via the DfE Census three times per academic year.

## **6. Absence of leave during term time**

The Academy may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. These could include: service personnel returning from tour of duty, absence of leave recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or the child's rehabilitation, the death or terminal illness of a person close to the family, to attend a funeral of a person close to the family (we will require evidence of this, for example a copy of the order of service). (Ref KCC Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct, effective from April 2017, Kent County Council Code of Practice dated 1st September 2014) Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Principal of the Academy. The Principal of the Academy will make the final decision of acceptance or refusal. The Academy will take into account the pupil's previous record of attendance. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

If absence is not authorised and a leave of absence of at least 10 sessions (5 days) is taken, a referral will be made to the local authority attendance service which may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each Parent for each child taken out of the Academy.

## **7. Persistent Absence Referrals**

A pupil is deemed to be a PA (Persistent Absentee) if their attendance falls below 90%. The Academy will consider pupils below 95% at risk. Pupils who fall into either of these categories will be monitored by the Academy attendance teams and the Attendance Manager. Different levels of falling attendance will trigger intervention via the 'Wave Model'. (Appendix 1)

Analysis of attendance by micro population will identify strengths and areas for intervention to further improve attendance. Trend data will be used to identify pupils or groups for interventions and will be shared with the relevant staff as outlined in the Ebbsfleet Attendance Strategy, (Appendix 1) professionals and relevant agencies. A referral may be made to the local authority attendance service should attendance remain poor after Academy and Trust interventions.

## 8. Penalty Notices

In line with Kent County Council Code of Practice 1 September 2014, the Academy follows set procedures for issuing penalty notices. Kent Attendance Service takes responsibility for issuing Penalty notices and taking other legal actions following referral by the Academy. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

### 8.1 Unauthorised absence:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence.
- Parents/Carers and pupils are supported by the Academy and local authority to overcome barriers to regular attendance. Sanctions are deployed where parental cooperation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem.
- A penalty notice can only be issued as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that its use will secure improvement.
- A penalty notice can only be issued where a pupil has been absent or late for a period/periods of time and the absence or lateness has not been authorised by the Academy.
- After the Academy has taken steps to resolve attendance concerns / warned the parent/carer of possible Penalty Notice referral, the Academy will refer directly to the local authority, to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence where the pupil has:
  - been absent for 10 or more half day sessions without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
  - been persistently late for up to 10 sessions after register has closed (15 minutes)
  - unauthorised absence for any public examination of which dates have been published in advance
  - unauthorised absence for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance
  - unauthorised Term Time Leave
- Unless the issuing of the Penalty notice in these circumstances would conflict with other interventions in place such as Early Help.

### 9. Exclusion:

A penalty notice can only be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours of days 1-5 of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where penalty notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

## 10 . Removing a Pupil from the Academy Roll

### 10.1 School Transfer

If parents/carers decide to transfer their child to another school or Academy, they should advise the Attendance Manager and the relevant head of school, as a matter of priority, providing all necessary details, including any new address (if relevant) and the school or Academy the child is transferring to.

When in the process of a school or Academy transfer the child must continue to attend the Academy until a start date has been agreed with the new school or Academy. If the Academy does not receive this information and a child stops attending, he or she becomes a 'Child Missing Education' (CME). Any child in

this category is reported to the Child Missing Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under safeguarding legislation.

## **10.2 Elective Home Education (EHE)**

If parents or carers take the decision to educate a child at home, they must inform the Academy of this in writing, this letter or email should be addressed to the Principal and include the date of decision to home educate and a brief explanation of the reasons for EHE. Once this letter is received, the Academy will remove the pupil from the Academy roll and advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with parents or carers. If an EHE request letter or email is not received, the pupil remains on the Academy roll and action may be undertaken following irregular or non-Academy attendance procedures and could lead to prosecution or an instant fine under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## Attendance Strategy & Action Plan 2023-2024

### Wave One - Tutor:

#### Student falls under 99-96%

The student is highlighted and monitored by the Attendance Manager and highlighted on a central spreadsheet. Form tutor speaks with the student's parent/carer as appropriate to explain any concerns and discuss ways to improve attendance. Seek appropriate evidence. Raising students' awareness. Letter sent for cause for concern for families.

### Wave Two - Pastoral Leader:

#### Student attendance falls below 95%

The school Attendance Manager, Pastoral Leader discusses the student (via the Inclusion meetings, raised by AM) and followed up with a parent meeting or phone call. If this has had no impact, a letter is sent home and kept on the student's file.

### Wave Three - Head of Key Stage/AP :

#### Student attendance is below 90%

After two weeks from the initial meeting, if the attendance has not improved, the parent/carer is invited in to meet with the Attendance Manager and Head of Key Stage or AP to discuss attendance and a formal school attendance plan is put in place. Return to school meetings with students returning from absences.

### Wave Four - Assistant Principal/Head of College/KCC:

After a further two weeks, if no significant improvement has been seen then a meeting with the Attendance Manager and Head of College/AP/KCC and parent/carer must take place, consideration given to inviting the local authority to support and put in place a formal attendance plan.

*The plan must include (Home School Agreement, start date, end date, reason for absences, strategies to support, next steps if not met)*

Any students that make an improvement in their attendance have a letter sent home acknowledging their improvement and thanking the family for their support. This is actioned by the Attendance Manager and their administration support.



## **Appendix 2**

### **CODE DESCRIPTION**

/ Present (AM)

\ Present (PM)

B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental 7etc. appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Y	Enforcedclosure/School/LA Transport unavailable/widespread disruption to travel.
Z	Pupil not yet on roll
#	School closed to pupils
7	Isolation room