



ASPIRE
Academies Trust

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed: September 2017 Review Frequency: Bi-annual

Introduction

Aspire Academies Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We strive to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will work consistently towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Legal Framework

Academy attendance is subject to various Education laws and this academy Attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

The Government expects the Trust to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Each year the academy will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Hertfordshire attendance targets. The academy will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

Related Policies and Documents

Please refer to the Home/School Agreement

AIMS

To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum that provides children with the best possible learning opportunities and experiences.

To provide a welcoming, safe and caring environment in which each pupil is valued and supported.

To build and maintain effective partnerships between the academy and its parental body, external support agencies and the wider community.

EXPECTATIONS

Pupils will:

- Attend the academy regularly
- Arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day

Parents will:

- they ensure their child attends school
- they contact the office between 8.30 & 9.30 whenever their child is unable to attend
- they ensure their child is appropriately dressed, taking account of the academy dress code
- they ensure their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day, with homework completed

The Trust/Academy will:

- Maintain regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and time keeping
- Have early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend
- Have contact with parents when there is no apparent consistent reason for absence and there is a pattern of absences, or an excessive number of absences or lateness
- Take immediate action on any problem notified to us, in confidence if necessary
- Provide positive measures to encourage good attendance
- The Academy will ensure every member of the academy staff makes good attendance and good punctuality a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education
- Offer a high quality education

Positive Measures to Promote and Record Attendance

- Registers will be completed accurately twice daily
- Daily monitoring of registers – raising concerns where appropriate
- Regular termly monitoring by Principal of attendance and punctuality
- Certificates to pupils with annual 100% attendance
- Discussion with Principal where attendance falls below 85% or if there is any other cause for concern.

PROCEDURES

Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Action the Academy may take regarding unauthorised absence without a known reason:

- On the first day of absence the parent will be contacted by phone using either text or a phone call to establish the reason for absence
- Write to the parent/carer requesting that they advise the academy of the reason for absence if no note is received upon the child's return to school
- Send follow-up letters at fortnightly intervals until the reason for absence is established
- Invite the parents into school when attendance becomes a concern, unless other action is planned to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school
- Make parents/carers aware of the legal requirements regarding academy attendance

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the class teachers 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 issue with the parent/s. The academy will seek the advice of health professionals or attendance specialists in order to gain advice on improving the pupil's attendance.

Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Long Term Absence

Where a pupil has had a long period of absence the Trust is committed to assist the pupil's re-integration to school. This would apply where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than six weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an

Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the academy staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Parental Requests for Holidays During Term-Time

Principals no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for family holidays or to agree to extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

Permission for family holidays in term time will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances. If granted, absence should not exceed ten days per year. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. There is no right to take a holiday in term time and you are **STRONGLY** advised not to book a holiday before discussing your exceptional circumstances with the Principal. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday, which has not been agreed, this will be classified as unauthorised and you may be fined or legal action taken against you. Absence will not be authorised at critical periods in our academy calendar e.g. at the start of the academy year, during SAT periods or in Year 6.

Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances may be requested in writing by submitting a letter to the Principal at least thirty days in advance, detailing the reasons why you are requesting the leave of absence, and what your exceptional circumstances are. You will then receive a letter informing you of the academy's decision. Following a request for leave parents may be called for interview with the Principal at his/her discretion. Parents should be aware that leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively.

Each request for absence will be considered individually. When making the decision the following factors will be considered:

- The amount of time requested
- The age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity to SATs and public examinations
- Length of the proposed leave
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Frequency of the activity, and

- When the request was made.

When leave of absence has been granted, the absence will be recorded as authorised, using the appropriate register symbol.

If parents take the child away without permission, or fail to apply for permission in advance of the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised, using the appropriate register symbol.

If the pupil is kept away for a period in excess of the time agreed with the academy the extra time will be treated as 'unauthorised' absence.

When a pupil is withdrawn during term time there is disruption to the learning process that can result in the pupil falling behind his/her group and can also affect relationships with friends. Parents cannot expect work to be provided by the academy.

Extended trips Overseas During Term-Time

Extended leave of absence will be granted in exceptional circumstances only and each individual case will be considered on its merits.

Failure to return on the agreed date

When granting leave of absence for an extended trip overseas, we will ensure that we have a date when the pupil will return to school.

A child can be withdrawn from roll if they have been granted leave of absence in excess of ten academy days and fail to attend school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the leave, and where the Principal is not satisfied that the absence is due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

Parents whose children fail to attend school regularly are committing an offence (Section 444 Education Act 1996).

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued, if a pupil has more than 15 sessions of unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, for unauthorised holidays and where it is considered that this action will be effective in helping to get the pupil back to school.

In such cases, the academy will:

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- In the first instance, issue a warning to parents and allow them 15 days to improve the situation.
- Follow this first warning with a formal written notification, explaining that actions may be taken
- Submit an application to issue a penalty notice to the Area Senior Attendance Improvement Officer.

Notices may be issued to each parent liable for the offence. Penalties are paid to the Local Authority and are as follows:

The penalty is £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days, but this is reduced to £60 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days.

If not paid in full by the end of 28 days after receipt details will be forwarded to the Local Authority, who may prosecute. The academy may be required to provide a witness statement and staff may be required to give evidence in court.

There is no right of appeal against the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

No parent will receive more than two separate notices per twelve-month period, but there is no restriction on the number of formal warnings which may be given.

The full guidance on Fixed Penalty Notices can be obtained by contacting the Area Senior Attendance Improvement Officer.

PUNCTUALITY/LATENESS

Punctuality

The Trust lays a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Punctuality ensures a good start to the day and shows consideration for everyone else in the class. It also avoids repetition of instructions and delays in the commencement of teaching. All children who arrive in school after the register is called will be marked as late.

Lateness

Registers open and morning registration takes place at the start of school at 8.50 am. The attendance register is completed electronically by the class teacher onto the SIMS Attendance Manager program. Doors and registers will remain open for a period of 10 minutes; any pupils arriving in class during this time will be marked as 'authorised late'. Pupils arriving after the doors have been locked and registers closed at 9.00am will be required to report to the school office to sign in and will be marked as having an 'unauthorised late' absence. 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.

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in **Regulation 8** of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This responsibility applies to all Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools, University Technical Colleges, Education Support Centres and Independent Schools. Full guidance on Removal from Roll is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or radicalisation please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If a school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should complete a Removal from Roll form and return it to the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If a school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter should be drawn without delay to the attention of the Local Attendance Team.

Further guidance and a referral form is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>