

E-ACT Pathways Academy Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Department Owner	Operations (National)
Section Owner	Education (National Attendance Lead)
Approver	Education & Personnel
Date Approved	July 2016
Review Date	July 2018
Status	This policy will require significant amendment and input for each individual E-ACT academy, however the framework of the policy should not be deviated from. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all academy specific information is completed.

Introduction

At Pathways Academy, we acknowledge that good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. We are committed to working with families/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

Attending school on a regular basis and being punctual is crucial for success. The best place for your child/children to be is in the Academy learning; any absence results in lost learning time.

Missing days of learning in succession (or over a period of time) makes catching-up more of a challenge for the pupil, and often they can find themselves falling behind.

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent
90%	19 days	4 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks

Aims of Policy:

- To maximise every child's potential through excellent attendance at our Academy.
- To ensure every child achieves at the appropriate level and is happy, healthy and safe.
- To improve the overall percentage of pupils' regular attendance.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the Academy including pupils, families, teachers and Ambassadors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to families and pupils.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and our Academy.
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To promote effective partnerships with The Attendance and Inclusion Service (AIS) and with other services and agencies.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

The Academy is dedicated not only to the educational development, but also the personal and social development of each child in its care. This is achieved through the emphasis of a positive, happy environment and a full, inclusive curriculum for all pupils.

We aim to ensure, through support, that all families value their child's education and aim to bring their child to our academy every day on time.

To ensure aims are met the Academy will ensure that:

- Clear procedures encourage pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining good attendance and punctuality.
- Families/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encourage them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- All teaching staff, non-teaching staff and Ambassadors understand the procedures
- Suitable resources are allocated to support the policy.
- Recognition and rewards are given to pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year.

Statutory Requirement.

Regular attendance at the Academy is a legal requirement, establishes good habits which will be valued later by employers and is vital if our young people are to gain the full benefit of the education provided and to succeed in public examinations. Doing all we can to ensure good attendance is, therefore, a priority for Pathways Academy. A successful Academy is a partnership between the Academy, the students, their parents/carers and the wider community. Absence from school, whether authorised (valid reason) or unauthorised (no valid reason) affects an individual's ability to form positive peer and adult relationships and develop social skills. The habits of regular and punctual attendance are important in their own right: they enable individuals to participate in social organisations and shared arrangements, to take on commitments, and to contribute at work as well as at school. Regular attendance at the Academy is also a legal requirement.

This document sets out below what is expected of the partners, the responses that the Academy will make to attendance issues and the specific roles and responsibilities of staff within the Academy:

- The Government's goal of 'raising educational standards for all young people' requires that students attend school as a pre-requisite to engaging with the curriculum and learning.
- It is the Local Authority's responsibility in law to enforce the regular school attendance of registered students of statutory school age.
- The Attendance and Inclusion (AIS) will serve attendance orders on parents and may institute proceedings against parents of a child who is in breach of a school attendance order or who are failing to secure the regular attendance of their child at school, having first considered whether to apply for an Educational Supervision Order with respect to the child (Sections 437, 443 and 444 of the Education Act 1996).
- The Academy has a legal duty to maintain Admissions and Attendance Registers and to record learner attendance or absence from school. The Academy also has a duty

to have effective systems in place to track and manage student attendance by developing clear whole school policies and procedures and by engaging with parents, other agencies and the wider community.

- Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child/children receive a full -time education and that children registered at a school attend regularly and punctually.

Promoting attendance and avoiding absence from school.

The purposes underpinning the Academy's attendance policy are to:

- encourage 100% attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all those associated with the Academy understand the expectations in relation to attendance and punctuality;
- produce regular information about class and individual attendance and punctuality which will enable the Academy to monitor trends and patterns so that appropriate measures can be taken to improve attendance and punctuality and thus academic performance.

Expectations

Pathways Academy will:

- Send out a text message if your child is absent and we have not heard from you, asking that you please contact the academy to explain the absence.
- Operate a first day response to contact parents on the first day of a child's absence.
- Accurately record the attendance and any absence of a student; through a system of registering pupils in class groups.
- Respond to any absence for which no parental explanation has been received after two days of absence with a visit to the student's home address to discuss the pupil's absence.
- In the case of known long term absence: where appropriate, provide work for the student at home; take action to achieve the successful reintegration of the student on their return.

What the Academy expects of families/carers:

- uphold the Home-Academy Agreement to ensure regular attendance;
- To ensure that their child attends regularly, ***on time*** and prepared for the day. To contact the Academy on the first day their child is absent for any reason. When your child returns to the Academy, provide a written explanation for the period of absence. If proof is not shown your child will be given an unauthorised absent mark on their attendance record.
- To arrange medical and dental appointments outside of the Academy day wherever possible, and to obtain an Authorised Absence Pass from the Academy if unavoidable. Where possible, every effort should be made to arrange appointments outside Academy hours, especially for in-going treatment.

- To arrange holidays out of term time wherever possible. (Further guidance is offered under the section *Holidays in term time* later in this policy.) If there is a need for a student to take time off during term time then the pupil's parent/carer should complete and return the 'Request for Absence' form to the Principal who will decide whether leave should be granted. Parents will be requested to meet with the Phase Leader to discuss the absence. The Academy will only grant term time leave in exceptional circumstances, in line with statutory regulations.
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem that may prevent their child from attending.
- To work positively with the Academy if a problem arises in order to secure the best outcome for the child.
- To provide a note, signed by the parent/carer, when the child returns to school explaining the reason for absence. This will be filed and may be produced if requested by officers of the Attendance and Inclusion Service.
- discharge their legal and moral responsibility to ensure their child attends the Academy according to the published dates and session times, and that they are equipped for all lessons;

Note: Parents/carers who remove their child during term time without authorisation from the Principal risk incurring a financial penalty and/or losing their child's place on the Academy roll resulting in parents/carers having to reapply for enrolment of their child.

We expect that our **pupils** will:

- regularly attend the Academy according to the published session times - ensuring they arrive at the Academy in time to be registered at the beginning of the morning session 8:55am.
- if they arrive late to the Academy but before the end of the registration period, they need to sign in at the Reception.
- if absent for a valid reason, they must remind their parent(s)/carer(s) of their responsibility to inform the Academy on the first day of absence and to provide a written note explaining the absence upon their child's return to the Academy.



How will the Academy respond to attendance issues?

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the academy acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

When problems of attendance arise the Academy will:

- Write a letter to inform you of the unacceptably low levels of your child's attendance, and explain that we are monitoring your child's attendance and expect it to improve immediately.
- If your child's attendance does not improve then you will be invited to meet with Phase Leaders to discuss the support can be offered and what the next steps are in ensuring the attendance improves.
- If this is unsuccessful in addressing attendance issues, Attendance and Inclusion Service will ensure parent(s) / carer(s) are aware of the situation and their responsibilities.

If attendance drops below 97% the following staged approach is applied.

A letter highlighting concern if attendance is below 97%, will be sent to the parent. There are often genuine reasons for absence but we like our families to know when attendance begins to drop.

Stage 1: If absence continues to be a problem the parent/carer is invited to an attendance panel/meeting with The Attendance Officer and a member of the Pastoral Team. The class teacher will monitor and speak to the child and parents. A referral to MAST could be made if attendance does not improve.

Stage 2: If, after six weeks of monitoring, attendance does not improve a Stage 2 letter will be triggered and parents will be invited to attend a meeting with Phase Leaders. Class teachers will continue to communicate with parents about loss of learning time.

Stage 3: Following a further six weeks monitoring, and there continues to be little improvement, parents will be invited to attend a formal meeting with the Principal and the Attendance and Inclusion Service. Formal prosecution letters will be sent to parents.

Attendance Workshops - A final attempt to resolve attendance problems may be offered through an invitation to attend an attendance workshop. An action plan will be put together to support improvement.

The aim of any intervention is to secure a positive outcome for children and improved attendance. All stages are carried out with respect and awareness of the diversity of family situations. Intervention is non-judgemental and supportive.

Punctuality

Punctual arrival at Pathways Academy in the morning and afternoon is important as this instils good working practices in pupils both inside and outside of the Academy. It also portrays a serious approach to studying and making the greatest use of the opportunities available to them.

Pupils are expected to

- arrive at 8:45am every day to begin for a prompt start at 8:55am

The following actions will be taken if a pupil is late:

- The Class Teachers and Office Staff will be aware of latecomers and will inform the Attendance Officer who has lead responsibility for attendance.
- The Attendance Officer will monitor and follow up persistent lateness, including appropriate support where necessary.
- Attendance and Inclusion Service involvement will be triggered when support has made no significant improvement
- Letters will be sent for parents to attend panels meeting with the Attendance Officer and a member of the Pastoral Team if lateness persists. Should there be no improvement after six weeks monitoring parents will be invited to attend a meeting with Phase leaders.

Additional information:

Family Holidays During Term Time

Family holidays should never be taken during term time. New legislation was introduced in September 2013 stating that holidays in term time are no longer allowed. Parents/Carers who take their children away during term time can be issued with a penalty notice (fine). The Principal can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances which does not usually include holidays.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave for exceptional circumstances, the Academy will consider each case individually, taking into account a child's overall attendance, the timing of the request during the school year and the reason for the leave of absence. In exceptional circumstances parents should request leave of absence for holidays in advance, and all requests should be submitted to the Academy Office at least two weeks before the first day of intended absence.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return.

Where a parent takes a child out of the Academy and leave of absence/family holiday has not been granted, procedures for issuing penalty notices to each parent/adult will begin. Leave of absence/family holidays taken without authorisation may be referred to the Attendance and Inclusion Service. This could result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed

Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued a separate Notice would be issued to each adult for each child.

AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER ADULT FOR ONE CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If the penalty is not paid each adult may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each adult may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Other requests for leave:

1. **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** - If the Academy is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised (M). Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (ie. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from families (either in person, in writing, by a telephone call or on production of an appointments card). A record is maintained by the Academy Office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning to the site. Please try to make appointments outside of the school day. Or please try to bring children to school before or after medical appointments to avoid absence (L). When granted an authorised absence pass is issued.
2. **Special Occasions** - It is the academy's responsibility to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not: much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Generally the rule should be that only truly exceptional occasions should be sanctioned through authorised absence after discussion with the Academy Principal or Phase Leaders.
3. **Family Bereavements** - The death of a close member of the family can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools will be very supportive of all families in this situation and will authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events. Any request would be dealt with sympathetically.
4. **Religious Observance** - Absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong is classified as authorised absence. It would be helpful if the academy could be given advance notice of religious observance days.
5. **Registration** - Registration takes place each morning at 8.55 am and each afternoon at 12.40pm for reception, 1pm for Key Stage 1 and and 1.10pm for Key Stage 2. Class teachers will enter the relevant attendance codes for each pupil on SIMS electronic register. Any notes received will be placed in the register for checking by office staff. All notes will be kept in a file until the end of term and be made available to officers from the Attendance and Inclusion Service where appropriate. Completion of the register is very important, as it is a legal document. It is used as an opportunity to support personal and social development by teachers, helping children to settle into the day. **It is vital children are present for this important time of the day.**
6. **Children Missing from Education**- The office staff liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority.