



Pupil Attendance Policy

Level 2

Date Adopted: 29th September 2020

1) Statement of Principle

In the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust, we believe that attendance and punctuality at our Academies is vital to the wellbeing and future prospects of all our pupils. Attendance and punctuality are intrinsically linked to our Trust's strategy for raising achievement. This policy provides the framework within which all staff, parents, pupils, carers and external agencies can contribute to the development and maintenance of a learning environment where high attendance and excellent punctuality is the "norm".

2) Aims

- To improve the overall percentage attendance and reduce unauthorised absence.
- To reduce the number of students who are persistent absentees (PAs).
- To establish a clear system for maintaining full attendance and excellent punctuality and clearly communicate this to all Trust staff, pupils and parents who are all working to agreed routines and standards;
- To develop a culture for learning environment across the Trust where pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and to be punctual because pupils feel valued members of the Academy community and that they are safe and secure;
- To put in place an effective and efficient administration system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality;
- To offer pupils and parents/carers good support, advice and guidance on the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

3) Objectives

3.1 For Pupils:-

- To ensure that pupils maximise their learning potential by taking responsibility for achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To support their fellow pupils and thereby their Academy in winning awards that relate to attendance and punctuality.
- To follow the Academy procedures for dealing with attendance and punctuality eg, bringing in signed letters from parents after a period of absence or late arrival for the Academy day.

3.2 For Parents and Carers

- To be fully supportive of the Academy with regard to attendance and punctuality as part of signing up to the Home-Academy Agreement.
- To support the Academy and their child(ren) by not requesting absence for holidays during term time and minimising where possible all other authorised absence, for example, dental appointments during the school day.
- To follow the Academy procedures for dealing with attendance through making contact with the Academy on the first day of absence and where this is not

possible, ensuring that they send a signed letter to the Academy when their child returns.

- To read and follow the guide (Appendix 1 Academy Guidance on Attendance for Parents and Carers) for parents/carers which details all our expectations and procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.

3.3 For Teachers/Learning Tutors

- To act as role models by being punctual to every lesson/registration.
- To take the register at the beginning of every lesson/registration period in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- To deal with any unauthorised absence from lessons, monitor the daily attendance statistics and deal with suspected truancy as detailed in this policy.
- To take responsibility for dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality in relation to their class.
- To encourage their pupils and tutees to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality through monitoring and reinforcing the need for high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality.
- To assist in reintegrating any of their pupils after a period of prolonged absence.

3.4 For Senior/Year/Phase Leaders

- To raise the profile of good attendance and monitor the attendance of pupils within their Year/Phase.
- To be responsible for regular liaison with the appropriate lead on Attendance and / or EWO regarding poor attendance of pupils and issues related to poor punctuality.
- To liaise with parents as appropriate in response to attendance, punctuality and truancy issues; attending panel meetings as appropriate.
- To ensure that teachers/ tutors in their Year/Phase fulfil their duties regarding attendance and punctuality and to take appropriate action when this does not occur.
- To ensure that the Academy reward system in relation to attendance and punctuality is used effectively within their Year/Phase.

3.5 Administration Support

- To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Academy's computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality. For example, processing registers, preparing and distributing attendance data.
- To liaise with teachers/senior leaders and establish reasons for absence including telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, letters and arranging home visits.
- To assist in following up poor attendance and punctuality, for example, organising attendance panel meetings with parents/carers and external agencies, arranging home visits, ensuring that pupil contracts and targets are agreed and monitored.

3.6 For the Academy Leadership Team

- Through Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance, to co-ordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the Academy.
- To raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through assemblies, newsletters and appropriate reward systems
- To analyse and act swiftly in response to report data on attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that the learning environment on offer to pupils, through the curriculum, personalised learning, behaviour policy and reintegration procedures, create the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality and low levels of fixed term exclusions.
- To ensure that Academy expectations in regards to this policy on attendance and punctuality is communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

3.7 For the Local Board

- To regularly review and agree the Attendance and Punctuality Management Policy, in line with this policy.
- To annually agree attendance targets.
- To take a lead role in supporting the Academy in the implementation of its approach to attendance and punctuality especially in our response to parents in supporting unauthorised absence.

4) Absence

Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child(ren) attends the Academy on a regular and full-time basis. Every half day absence has to be classified by the Academy as either authorised or unauthorised. The Academy must record the reason for any half day absence. Unauthorised absence such as truancy will lead to sanctions being taken against pupils or in exceptional cases, extended periods of unauthorised absence may lead to legal action being taken against parents.

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a pupil should miss any lessons is if they are too ill to attend. This is an example of an authorised absence, ie, pupils have missed a morning or afternoon session for a valid reason. Unauthorised absences are those, which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes keeping students away from lessons unnecessarily, truancy and absences, which the Academy considers to have not been properly explained.

The Education (Pupil Regulations) 2006 and the DfES Circular 10/99 state that a leave of absence can only be granted at the discretion of the Local Board/Principal.

The Local Board/Principal should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Local Board/Principal must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Local Board/ Principal will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Local Board/Principal's discretion. Only in exceptional cases shall more than ten days be granted in any one year.

5) Procedures for Registration

Each Academy should set out its policy and procedures for registration and ensure that all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the procedures. These should include how to report sickness absence or apply for leave of absence, when a pupil will be marked as 'late' and the consequences of this.

6) Punctuality/Truancy

It is vitally important that all staff are punctual to ensure that pupils understand that lateness is not acceptable. Year / Phase/Senior leaders must reinforce the importance of punctuality and attendance when communicating with pupils and parents.

Procedures for dealing with lateness and truancy should be set out in the Academy's Attendance Policy and Procedures document

7) Strategies for Ensuring High Attendance and Excellent Punctuality

Senior Leaders at each Academy should take overall responsibility for encouraging and rewarding publicly high attendance and excellent levels of punctuality. This will commonly be achieved through assemblies and reward schemes. These may include certificates or other rewards for 100% attendance.

7.2 First Day contact and Dealing with absence

Attempts should be made to contact any parent/carer on the first day of absence and establish the reason for absence. A telephone call can substitute for a note but the authenticity of the caller must be established. Where contact has not been possible, this must be followed up and signed notes should be obtained from parents. Information regarding pupil absence must be recorded against the relevant pupil's record, including any attempts to contact the parent/carer.

A list of all outstanding absences should be regularly reviewed and reasons for absence pursued.

7.3 Attendance Support

Attendance and punctuality should be regularly monitored by senior leaders and the local Board.

Where students are likely to have a period of long absence, for example from a period of illness, then arrangements should be made for appropriate work to be sent home and marked when returned. Class teachers should also ensure contact is maintained e.g. through newsletters.

Where there is a significant pattern of absence, the Lead for Attendance should:

- Involve the EWO in developing strategies for intervention.
- Attend as relevant, weekly panel meetings to discuss any students causing concern regarding attendance and punctuality.
- If attendance falls below 85%, work with the EWO in convening a “Persistent Absence, (PA)” attendance panel meeting, involving parents, in establishing targets for attendance and punctuality along with strategies for support in successfully reintegrating students back into the Academy.
- Students with attendance between 85% and 90% should also be tracked and the appropriate intervention taken, for example, a meeting with parents. Patterns should also be analysed to detect any condoned absence or suspected periods of truancy.
- For attendance between 90% - 95%, staff should play an active role in advocating the importance of full attendance to both pupils and parents.
- If the attendance is longer than a period of ten continuous days and is treated as unauthorised absence then key agencies should be informed.
- All steps should be taken to ascertain the student’s whereabouts and documentation should be kept on this process.
- The LA must be further informed if the student’s absence is continuous for a further 10 days if whereabouts are unknown and all contact has failed.

In a small minority of cases, referrals may have to be made to the LA, for example, where parents are unwilling and failing to comply with the agreed action plans as a result of a panel meeting. This may lead to the issue of a fixed penalty notice and possible court action being taken if the LA involvement does not lead to the student returning to the Academy.

7.4 Warning Letters and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

The Trust believes that when avenues of supportive intervention such as telephone calls, meetings with parents and any home visits have been used and there has been no improvement in attendance then we will use the legal avenues that are open to us. The Trust encourages Academies to use the following:-

7.4.1 Leave of Absence

As stated in Section 4, the Academy does not support any holidays requested during term time. If a request is made for a leave of absence and this is not approved and the student does not attend during the stated period then a fixed penalty notice could be issued upon the student's return.

7.4.2 Students with less than 90% attendance (with unauthorised absence)

Students who have less than 90% attendance with any period of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period will receive a warning letter (Letter 1) from the Academy. This letter will state the student's overall attendance percentage. If there is no improvement in attendance, or if attendance is below 85%, a formal concern (Letter 2) will be issued. If attendance does not improve, normally within the subsequent 2 week period, you will be invited in for a School Attendance Meeting to discuss concerns and set targets.

7.4.3 Late for the Academy day (after registers have closed – use of the U code)

Students who arrive at the Academy after 9.30am are registered as "late after the registers have closed" and this is recorded as a U, which is an unauthorised absence for the am session. Any parent/carer of a student who records more than 5 U codes in any one half-term a meeting will be arranged. This will be preceded by a warning letter to the parent/carer after the 3rd U is recorded in the Academy register informing of the consequences of reaching a 5th U in the register.

7.5 Reintegration Programmes

If a student has had a period of absence for longer than five days then the class teacher/form tutor will instigate the reintegration programme. This will involve the class teacher/tutor supporting their pupil in reintegrating back into Academy life. It will involve a series of support meetings initiated by a first meeting that explains the programme to students, discusses subject issues and sets agreed targets. This is then developed through further support meetings over a period of two weeks after the date of return. The completed form will then be placed in the student's file. The form is in Appendix 3.

7.6 Reintegration through the Guidance manager

Following a period of prolonged absence, a student will be referred to the EWO or other appropriate person depending on the level of support required. A meeting will take place with the parent/carer and student to discuss a reintegration programme. Consideration will be given to a reduced timetable initially to ensure a smooth reintegration.

8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Senior Leaders of the Academy will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through analysis of attendance data and reports. Patterns of lateness or absence should be identified and action plans generated. These could include reviewing any related policies

and procedures such as Student Voice/Council in working with students to generate strategies to improve punctuality. Comparisons will be made across the Trust and where appropriate actions to improve attendance and/or punctuality will feature in Academy Improvement Plans.

Appendix 1: Guidance on Attendance for Parents and Carers Attendance Processes and Procedures at Sutton Benger CE Primary School

Normal start of school day timings:

- Gate open by 8:45am and classroom doors open at 8:50am
- Gate closed at 8:58am. Children arriving after this time to be taken to main reception to sign in
- Registers completed by 9am. Children arriving after 9am will be recorded as 'L' (Late)
- Children arriving after 9:30am are registered as 'Late after the registers have closed' and this is recorded as 'U', which is an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Absence reporting and attendance concern procedures:

- **1st day absence contact:** If your child is unable to be in school, you must inform us on the first day, and every day after that. You can contact us via telephone, email or by completing the 'Daily sickness absence form' on our school website.
- Attendance is monitored every two weeks, with a focus on children whose overall attendance is below 90%.
- **Letter 1:** You will receive this letter if your child's absence has fallen below 90%. This is to make you aware of their attendance percentage and an opportunity to let us know if there is any support we can provide.
- **Letter 2:** You will receive this letter if your child's attendance is below 85%, or if there has not been an improvement to your child's overall attendance following Letter 1. This letter will indicate that there is a formal concern regarding your child's attendance.
- **School Attendance Meeting (SAM):** This is a formal meeting held with the Headteacher to discuss attendance concerns and set targets for improvement.
- **Education Welfare Service (EWS):** If unauthorised absences amount to 10 sessions or more (5 school days), continuous or aggregated within the previous 6 months of current academic year, we are expected to notify the EWS.

Leave of absence requests:

- **Medical appointments:** We encourage you to make medical appointments (e.g. dentist, opticians etc.) outside of school time. If your child must attend a medical appointment during school time, you must complete a Leave of Absence Request form and attach evidence of the appointment (e.g. letter, text, email). We ask that you do this in advance of the absence where possible.
- **Term-time holidays:** You do not have the legal right to take your children out of school during term-time. Any absences for term-time holidays will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a fixed-penalty notice being given (if the leave of absence contributes to 10 or more sessions over the 6-month period or if there are already attendance concerns).

Exceptional circumstances:

If you believe there are exceptional circumstances for why you must take your child out of school, please explain this on the Leave of Absence Request form. It is always the Headteacher's decision whether or not to allow you to take your child out of school during term-time, and this decision will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- *the death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family*
- *service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year.*

If you would like to request a meeting to discuss the outcome of your request, please contact the office to arrange this.

Appendix Two – Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings
For use with the am and pm roll call.

Code	Description	Statistical meaning	Physical meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole school
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole school
@	Do not use	Unauthorised Absence LATE FOR SESSIONS	
B	Educated off site	Approved educational Activity	Out for the whole session
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
D	Dual registration	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
F	Extended family holiday agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
H	Family Holiday agreed	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
L	Late	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
S	Study Leave	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
U	Late after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session

W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
X	DCSF: School closed to Students	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
Z	Do NOT USE	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
!	DCSF X: Non-compulsory school age abs	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
#	School closed to Students and staff	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
*	DCSF Z: Student not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
-	All should attend/ No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session

Appendix Three – Example Reintegration Form After Prolonged Absence

Student Name and Home Group			
Phase Leader		Guidance Manager	
Date of First Absence		Date of Return to the Academy	
Details of outstanding work	brief outline of the work missed:		
Targets (including priorities) set with students	1. 2. 3.		
Meeting 1	Outcomes		
Meeting 2 5 days later	Outcomes		
Meeting 3 10 days later	Outcomes		
Meeting 3 15 days later	Outcomes		

Guidance Manager's Signature _____ **Student signature** _____

EWO's Signature _____ **Parent/Carer's signature** _____

Appendix 4 Example Application for Leave of Absence

PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Taking your child out of school during term time may harm your child’s academic progress.

Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances.

Circumstances which are notified to the school or Local Authority **after** a decision has been made by the Headteacher will not be considered. Therefore please be certain to provide details of the exceptional circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Please read the attached Local Authority leaflet which explains Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time.

We advise that you do not book holidays in term time, even if you consider the circumstances to be exceptional, until you have ascertained whether it has been appropriate to give consent in your case.

Name of Child(ren)	
Class	
Date of First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Number of Days Requested	

Exceptional Circumstances (reason) for Leave of Absence during term time:

.....

.....

.....

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Authorised/Not Authorised Mrs Becca Hine, Headteacher

Headteacher comments:

Appendix 5 HOW MUCH SCHOOLING HAVE YOU MISSED?

100% ATTENDANCE MEANS THAT YOU HAVE BEEN IN SCHOOL EVERY DAY OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

99% = 2 days missed of the school year (4 sessions missed)

98% = 4 days missed of the school year (8 sessions missed)

97% = 6 days missed of the school year (over 1 school week)

96% = 8 days missed of the school year (16 sessions missed)

95% = 10 days missed of the school year (2 school weeks)

94% = 12 days missed of the school year (24 sessions missed)

93% = 14 days missed of the school year (28 sessions missed)

92% = 16 days missed of the school year (over 3 school weeks)

91% = 18 days missed of the school year (36 sessions missed)

90% = 20 days missed of the school year (4 school weeks)

89% = 22 days missed of the school year (44 sessions missed)

88% = 24 days missed of the school year (48 sessions missed)

87% = 26 days missed of the school year (over 5 school weeks)

86% = 28 days missed of the school year (56 sessions missed)

85% = 30 days missed of the school year (6 school weeks)

70% = 1½ days missed per week (12 weeks missed per year)

60% = 2 days missed per week (2 days missed almost 4 months)

50% = 2½ days missed per week (19 weeks missed)

40% = 3 days missed per week (19 weeks = over ½ a school year missed)

Appendix 6

Updates from DfE relevant to attendance due to COVID-19

In March, when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was increasing, DfE made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Schools will work with families to secure regular school attendance from the start of term as this will be essential to help pupils catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.

Schools will:

- Communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the summer ahead of the new school year.
- Identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This

should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with the school regularly during the pandemic.

- Use the additional catch-up funding schools will receive, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils' regular attendance.
- Work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.

Guidance on full school opening

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#attendance>