

Appendix to Attendance Policy December 2020

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Associated documents:			
Guidance on School attendance – September 2018 DfE		Diverse Academies Attendance Policy	
Links to:			
https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2020/03/Attendance.pdf			

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Diverse
Academies

1 Aims

1.1 The agreed aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure pupils attend 'every day' so that they access full learning opportunities. The expectation is that each children should maintain an attendance of at least 97%.
- Ensure compliance with the parental duty stated under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 for making sure their child of compulsory academic age receives full time education.

Poor attendance has been shown to impact on learning and attainment throughout a child's education which can lead to limited life choices for them.

For our pupils to fulfil their potential we have a duty to encourage, support and enforce good attendance.

2 Holidays in Term Time

2.1 The academy calendar is structured with sufficient holiday breaks across the year to enable families to arrange holidays outside of term time, the exception to this, in accordance with the Armed Forces covenant, being Forces families who may not be able to take a holiday out of term time due to one or both parents being deployed overseas over school holiday periods.

The legal requirement is that parents ensure children attend the academy regularly.

Pupils are expected to attend the academy for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.

3 Types of Absence

There are two main categories of absences:

3.1 **Authorised Absence:** the academy has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.

- Hospital appointments
- Genuine illness resulting in unavoidable absence. Not headlice, headaches, sore throats.
- Religious observances
- **Close** family bereavement

3.2 **Unauthorised Absence:** the academy has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence further to parent request.

- Any holiday (even when gifted or booked as a surprise by another family member)
- Birthday celebration/family event including weddings
- Shopping
- Parents medical appointments –not direct needs of the child i.e ante-natal scans

4 Pupils Percentage Attendance

4.1	97% and above	Excellent! Best chance of success
	96% - 93%	Academy to monitor. Progress may be weakened due to gaps
	93% - 90%	Negative effect on attainment, academy will need to meet with parents to offer help
	Less than 90%	Persistent absence - Serious concern! Academy will need to meet with parents. After six weeks review, improvement must be seen to avoid other agencies becoming involved.

5 Staff and Governors

5.1 The staff and governors believe that:

- An effective Attendance Policy needs to be supported by parents in partnership with the academy.
- Pupils need to attend the academy regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities and make good progress.
 - Establishing good patterns of attendance at an early age will support positive attendance throughout the academy. Non-compulsory pupils are expected to attend every day unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Special consideration and support needs to be given to pupils where medical needs may impact on attendance.
- Poor attendance significantly impacts on learning and progress and therefore there needs to be a rigorous and consistent approach where parents go against the academy guidance and expectations.
- Poor attendance and punctuality can be an indication of safeguarding and welfare issues.

6 Concerns

6.1 Concerns in attendance can be defined where:

- Parents take children out of the academy in term time
 - Parents take children out of the academy at the start of a term / year or prior to or during KS1/2 test periods
- Pupils are absent on individual days whether explained or unexplained
- There is unexplained absence
- Patterns of absence e.g. regular Mondays/Fridays

- Holidays in term time

7 Persistent Absence

7.1 Absence includes holidays, illness, medical appointments and lateness after **registers close at 9.15am**

A persistent absentee has an attendance of 90% or less.

90% attendance is equivalent to 19 days absence in an academic year. These pupils are missing 4 weeks of education a year.

Pupils with 80% attendance are missing a day for every week of the academic year.

Academy support is offered to parents.

Parental consent may be sought to invite external support agencies.

If improvement of attendance is not seen further to meeting with parents or parents not engaging with offer of support the Academy will request for a Local Authority Attendance Officer to become involved.

8. Penalty notices for poor attendance

8.1 The Government has set the persistent absence threshold to 10% from September 2015. Where the attendance of a pupil falls below 90% this can lead to a penalty notice being issued where there are concerns about unauthorised absence or, in cases of illness, the legitimacy of the absence and, following support from the academy, attendance does not improve.

8.2 Penalty Notices can be requested when:

- More than 3 days unauthorised absence over a 6 week period
- More than 3 days unauthorised absence where this is for the purpose of a holiday in term time
- Where parents fail to ensure that their child attends regularly even though support has been provided by the academy
- Where there is a repeated pattern of unauthorised absence leading to attendance below 95%
- Where a pupil is persistently late for 10 separate instances over a period of six academy weeks and where these are signified as a "U" in the attendance register.

9 Monitoring

9.1 **Attendance monitoring**

The Family Support Adviser will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Principal.

Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- When a child's attendance falls below 90% the academy will send an initial concern letter home.
- If the concerns persist for another 2 weeks the academy will write to the parents/carers advising them that their child's attendance will be monitored for 6 weeks from the date of the initial concern letter.
- If there is no improvement after the 6 week period the academy will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, academy representative and the Governors. This will be followed by a letter confirming outcomes of the meeting and informing parents that if attendance does not improve, a request will be made for a penalty notice to be issued.
- Where pupils are absent unauthorised for 3 days, a letter will be sent to parents warning that a penalty notice may be issued
- Where there have been concerns shared with parents and support has been offered but attendance continues to be a concern, a request will be made for a penalty notice.

9.2 Reporting illness as reason for absence

Parents and Carers must notify the academy by 9.15am on each day of absence. The Academy cannot assume your child is still too ill to attend school - for Safeguarding reasons sickness must be reported to the academy every day. On the fourth day of illness the academy will advise and require some form evidence that a medical appointment has been attended, this can be a doctor's appointment card or copy of a prescription. Without evidence from the fourth day the absent will be unauthorised.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the academy with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised, particularly if the child then gives us a contradicting reason for their absence. Your child's current and previous academy attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child away from the academy with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable and may be unauthorised. Where repeated absence for illness is seen we will request a meeting with the parent.

9.3 Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill.

Children must be in class by 8.50am each day. Teachers collect their class from the playground from 8.40am to allow all children to be in class and working by 9.00am. Morning registers will be taken at 8.50am. Children will be marked late if they arrive at the academy after 8.50am when they have to enter through the main entrance. Lateness will be monitored and the Family Support Adviser will follow this up. If the arrival at the academy is after the registers have closed at 9.15am, the pupil will receive a 'U' code. This equates to an unauthorised absence despite the pupil being on the academy premises.

If 10 unauthorised 'Lates' are accrued within in a 6 week period the Academy will request a meeting with parents and can request a penalty notice.

10. Promoting Good Attendance

10.1 We celebrate good attendance throughout our academy.

Classes will be celebrated on a Friday assembly for good attendance:

Class attendance for the week is included in the newsletter with the winning class congratulated and receiving an attendance cup.

100% attendance – Book Token and certificates are given to individual children at the end of an academic year.

11. Governors' Role

11.1 Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Academies Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

It is our Board of Governor's legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance within their Academy. The Academy's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body at Local Academy Board Meetings.

The Board must agree an academy policy which:

- enables the academy to secure attendance which is at least in line with Government and Local expectations.
- promotes the importance of good attendance throughout the academy and local community
- uphold the agreed Attendance Policy
- support the Academy Principal, where applicable, to make joint decisions

12 Academy Principal's Role

- ensure parents and carers are informed about the academy attendance policy.
- develop strategies to improve attendance
- outline the importance of maximum attendance to parents at every opportunity; new parents' meetings, open evenings, newsletters
- outline to parents the procedure for notifying academy about pupils' absences.
- ensure letters are sent as stated in the procedure by the Family Support Adviser
- investigate absence where related to safeguarding or wellbeing concerns
- Liaise with staff to work with families to improve pupil attendance
- To enforce attendance procedures rigorously, including requesting for penalty notices to be issued where appropriate
- To analyse attendance for vulnerable groups with the SENCO/FSW
-

13 Family Support Adviser's Role

- attend the Attendance networks and work with the AP to develop strategies to improve attendance
- telephone parents where there is unexplained absence and record details
- monitor attendance daily for pupils of concern and record details
- inform AP/designated person where a pupil with safeguarding issues is absent

- refer to class teacher, SENCo or AP where absence may be due to medical needs or welfare issue To report attendance weekly, half termly, termly and annually to AP
- provide reports to class teachers before parents' evenings
- deal with requests for leave in term time in the same week they are received
- send letters in response to requests as agreed with AP To send letters confirming referral for a penalty notice
- analyse patterns in attendance
- provide termly reports for governors committee
- provide attendance information for end of year reports

14 Teacher's Role

- To administer registration efficiently and promptly
- To make it clear to their pupils that they value maximum attendance
- To encourage punctual arrival at the academy
- To be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence and speak to parents where there are any concerns
- Investigate where absence may be due to issues affecting pupil welfare bullying/anxiety/home circumstances and put support in place Refer to SENCo, FSM, Academy Principal of concerns
- To inform the Academy Principal immediately if child on protection plan is absent or if there are any concerns whatsoever about the whereabouts of a child
- To discuss attendance of below 90% with parents at parents evening

15 Parent's Role

14.1 Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parents and carers are responsible for making sure that their child receives efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at the academy or otherwise.

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the Academy's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on their child's learning.

Regular academy attendance is essential.

Parents are expected:

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.50 a.m.
- To inform the academy of any absence and keep us up to date of any prolonged absence. If we are not informed of a reason for absence this will be considered as unauthorised.
- To inform us of leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the academy and The Family Service to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the academy day. Medical appointments don't normally need a full day so children should only be absent for the length of the appointment. They should attend the academy before the appointment and return to the academy immediately after.
- Do not take holidays in academy term time

14.2 Parental Concern

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at academy they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.
- Talk to either Mrs Wright (Family Support Adviser) or Mrs Witham (Academy Principal)

16. Pupil's Role

- To arrive at the academy for 8:50 a.m. on time
- To report to the office if late. (After 8.50am)
- To attend the academy on every possible day.