



## **Attendance Policy**

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

Our academy is committed to providing a quality education for all pupils. We believe that pupils can only benefit from the education in our academy through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all pupils and we will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly. Wherever possible, we will make contact with parents where a pupil is absent from school without good reason. The Home-Academy Agreement presents the academy with an opportunity to underline the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school.

### **AIMS:**

It is recognised that

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

### **EXPECTATIONS:**

It is expected that all parents will support the academy by ensuring their child(ren) always attend lessons unless illness or some unforeseen problem arises. Appointments at hospitals, medical centres, clinics and dentists should be made outside school hours unless impossible to rearrange. When there is a problem with attendance, parents are invited to a meeting to discuss the problem Pupil and Family Support Worker and/or the AIO (Attendance Improvement Officer). If there are child protection concerns then the Child Protection Procedures should be followed immediately.

*We expect the following from pupils:*

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

*We expect the following from parents:*

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the academy as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

*Parents and pupils can expect the following from academy:*

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- A quality education

## **ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS**

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- Registers are taken and accurately completed at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording of good attendance on individual reports and /or Records of Achievement.
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3 or when leaving one school for another. Relevant information should be shared with the destination school.
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Sending parents appropriate absence reports as and when necessary.

## **RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:**

When a pupil does not attend, the academy needs to respond effectively.

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, whenever possible the parents will be contacted early on the first day of absence by telephone or by email if parents are not on the telephone. All emergency contacts will be called.
- Where there is no response, a home visit for a welfare check will be made by the Pupil and Family Support Worker, AIO or a member of the leadership team.
- If no contact can be made via the home visit and there are concerns for the child's safety, the police will be called for a welfare check.
- Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with the Pupil and Family Support Worker, Child Protection Designated Teacher and AIO for the academy and further action planned. This may, in appropriate cases, result in a formal referral to Social Care for non-attendance.

## **Reintegration:**

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme.
- A designated member of staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.

- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. The success of the support programme will require the involvement of appropriate academy staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Support programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

#### **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:**

Authorised absence is where the academy has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Pupil illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

#### **Family Holidays:**

Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during the school term. Green Lane Primary Academy does not authorise holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances. If a parent takes the child on holiday, the absence will not be authorised. The academy reserves the right to fine as outlined by the government.

The school is not responsible for setting work during a family holiday. However, independent work is encouraged.

#### **LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. It may be necessary in exceptional cases to require support beyond the remit of the academy or the AIO. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The Pupil and Family Support Worker is able to help the academy establish multi-agency meetings.

Other Agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Family Support Workers- Extended Services
- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police

## Agreed Policy within the School Partnership Trust Academies

### APPENDIX

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities....

#### The Importance of Registration:

- An attendance register, electronic or manual, must be kept on which, at the BEGINNING of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. Registers should be collected from and returned to the school office.
- Manual registers must be kept in ink and corrections must be made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable.
- Authorised absences should be entered in red initially with the symbol for categorising the absence in blue or black.
- Where electronic registers are used, hard copies, current for each session, must be kept to observe the spirit of the law and for Health and Safety reasons.
- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.
- Attendance registers, and bound copies of electronic registration print outs must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

#### Categorising Absence:

##### Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories)

From 1 September 2006 all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence. The Department for Education believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns to DfE without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both Las (Local Authorities) and DfE in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

- Only the school, in the context of the law can authorise absence, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Principal.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Principal.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- Class teachers who experience difficulty in receiving a parental note should inform the Principal.

#### The Use of Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time

The AIO (Attendance Officer) will work with head teachers to agree the most appropriate course of action for each individual case.

#### Approved Educational Activity

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data for the DfE absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off site should not be marked as present.

The following activities fall within this category:

- Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas.

Absences should not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips
- Holidays in term time
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- No reason given.
- Academy staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid. Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Principal to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

Lateness:

Schools should actively discourage late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation. Schools should have a policy on how long registers remain open, thirty minutes from the beginning of registration would be reasonable but this can be shorter. In the event of bad weather this period can be extended. Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present. Where a pupil arrives after register closure, they should be marked with an unauthorised absence in red and the letter L in blue or black to indicate that they are on site.

Removal from the school roll

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended 1997) and the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2).

Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal:

- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
- Where the school has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Principal of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Attendance Improvement Officer to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the Principal has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where a pupil in the nursery class has not transferred to a reception class at the school.
- Except in the case of a boarder, the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school.
- If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory schools age before the school next meets and has been notified an intention to discontinue in attendance.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

### Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date

Schools should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

### Pupils who are missing

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfE National MissingPupils Database.

### How parents can help:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- Contact the school whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason or the absence and the length of time the child will be away.
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child.
- Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.
- To avoid, wherever possible, taking family holidays in term-time. Term time absences, especially during SATs and examination periods, may seriously affect the progress of your child.

### **Safeguarding:**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

### Children Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The academy follows procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. For further information, Please refer to the academy's Child protection Policy on our website. All staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced

marriage. The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State)

Agreed Policy within the

Date of policy implementation: June 2013

Date of recent policy review: January 2016

Next policy review: January 2019

Signature, Chair of Educational Advisory Board: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature, Principal: \_\_\_\_\_