

Attendance Policy

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Policy Statement

- 1 The Trust is an organisation with a Christian foundation. The ethos, values and relationships of the Trust, and its associated academies, are central to witnessing to the value of the foundation. The Academy Trust values the contribution that every pupil can make to the life of each academy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the academy monitors and supports the full attendance of all pupils so that they participate fully in the life of the academy, feel equally valued and are helped to reach their full potential.
- 2 **Purpose & Scope:** This policy is intended to provide clear guidance to Local Governing Bodies, all DGAT staff and parents in respect of the Trust's expectations of pupil's attendance and the procedures to follow where concerns about levels of attendance arise.

Objectives

- 3 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2013, requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have by regular attendance at school. It is the responsibility of all parents/carers to ensure that they are fully aware of the academy's expectations and work proactively and supportively with the academy to maximise their child's attendance. Regular attendance is essential in ensuring children achieve. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so can performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem. In addition, absence can disrupt teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. As a result, all pupils are expected to attend the academy for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.
- 4 The aim of this policy is therefore to:
 - promote regular attendance, thus offering all pupils equal access to learning
 - safeguard the wellbeing of pupils
 - meet (and in most cases exceed) the Government attendance targets
 - create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents
 - ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days possible.
- 5 There are two main categories of absences:
 - **Authorised Absence:** is when the academy has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
 - **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the academy has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a pupil's absence from the academy after a parental request.
- 6 Parents should be aware that when they telephone the academy with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.

- 7 All pupil absence will be monitored by the academy, including trends or patterns of absence. This will be taken into consideration before authorising absence.
- 8 Pupils should not be absent from the academy for minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold.
- 9 Repeated absences will require the academy to request that parents obtain medical evidence from their doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming a visit or sight of a prescription. Parents should discuss with each academy what documentation/ evidence will be required in order for the absence to be authorised. (Please note: that the academy is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

A Welcome Back

- 10 It is important that on return from an absence 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.

Promoting Good Attendance

- 11 Each academy will maximise opportunities to celebrate good attendance. This will be achieved through a variety of means, including, but not limited to:
 - Awarding certificates for high attendance
 - Celebrating attendance in assemblies

Compliance

- 12 All DGAT academies will be fully compliant with the Education(Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2013. For further information, please visit: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance>
- 13 It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that pupils attend school. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 14 Failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered a safeguarding matter.

Responsibility for Attendance

- 15 Attendance is the shared responsibility of parents/carers, the academy and the Local Authority.
- 16 Academy Responsibilities:
 - To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the academy
 - To maintain appropriate attendance data
 - To have appropriate registration processes in place
 - To follow up absences and lateness if parents have not communicated with the academy - initially with a first-day absence telephone call
 - To inform parents of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
 - To maintain systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness
 - To report to Local Government on attendance as and when required
 - To consistently administer the attendance procedure

- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance.

17 Parent/carers Responsibilities:

- To ensure pupils are in class ready to learn by the start of the day
- To inform the academy on **every** day of any absence
- To request leave as far in advance as possible – please note that leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances
- To make applications for leave in writing on the appropriate form
- To work with the academy to improve lateness and attendance
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the academy day.

18 If parents, or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs parent/carers help in resolving and talk to their child's class teacher.

Monitoring Attendance

19 The member of staff with responsibility for attendance will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss regularly with the class teacher and Principal. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the academy will make verbal contact with parent/carers.

Stage 2: If the concerns persist the academy will write to the parents/carers and arrange a meeting with the parents.

Stage 3: If the concerns persist the academy will arrange a further meeting between the parent and academy representative.

Stage 4: If the concerns persist the academy will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues.

20 Should concerns persist, please note that ultimately the academy reserves the right to take legal action.

21 Whilst 100% attendance is clearly ideal, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Attendance which falls below 85%, where a child is known to be in reasonable health and there is no other extenuating circumstances gives cause for concern. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 15% or more schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority by each academy.

Absence during term time

22 Please note that Regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 regulation states that it prohibits the Academy Trust granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Trust considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

- 23 Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 24 Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- 25 Leave of absence will only be granted where the Principal considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 7 academy days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- 26 There are approximately 195 academy days (390 sessions) a year which pupils are expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that family holidays are taken during this period.

Fixed Penalty Notices

- 27 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate notice would be issued to each parent for each pupil. As of 1st September 2013, the rate per parent per pupil will be £60 within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.
- 28 If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Lateness

- 29 Each academy will specify the time that pupils are expected to arrive. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Pupils will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.
- 30 Lateness will be monitored and an academy will follow any pattern of lateness up with parents and, if the academy deems it appropriate, the Education Welfare Officer.
- 31 Parents should be aware that consistently late is disrupting not only their own child's education but also that of the other pupils and therefore lateness is considered to be equally serious to absence.

Governance and the monitoring of attendance

- 32 The performance indicator for academy attendance will be set each year by the Local Governing Body. The Local Governing Body will take into consideration the Ofsted desired target for all schools. Each academy will aspire to meet this target as a minimum. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- 33 In order to ascertain the levels of individual pupil's attendance, regular checks are undertaken and where there is cause for concern appropriate action shall be taken.

Absence notes

- 34 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.

Other Related Documents

Behaviour Policy

Equal Opportunity Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Policy

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions