



Staffordshire University Academy		Academy Policy Document			
Approved by:	LAC	Issue date:	July 2023	Review date:	Sept 2024
Policy Title	Attendance Policy				
Policy owner	Assistant Principal			Page 1 of 4	
Audience:	Staff	Students	LAC	Parents	

Attendance at SUA

The Principal is responsible for the operational management of the policy and can delegate lead to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The Attendance Officer, with the support of the form tutor, pastoral leads and the Safeguarding and Attendance Manager, will follow up individual students and analyse attendance data to identify trends for individual students, classes and year groups enabling the academy to target efforts. Wherever possible, action will be taken by the academy to improve a student's attendance and investigate and address any underlying cause of problems before considering whether to make a referral to the Local Authority.

It is not appropriate for the academy to authorise absences for holidays, shopping, looking after other children/siblings, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments where there is no option but to arrange during school time (copies of appointment cards/letters must be provided preferably prior to appointments being attended). Where possible, students will be accommodated in the academy before and after their appointments. It is expected that parents do not ask for time off for children's dental appointments.

The academy has adopted the following attendance targets:

- We are working towards each student achieving at least 96% (*the national attendance target is 95%; this is achieved whilst missing 9.5 days across the academic year*)
- We are committed to reducing persistent absence (*the DfE considers children who miss more than 10% of their attendance in school as being persistently absent*)
- We are committed to reducing the number of unauthorised absences and to continue to build and maintain excellent partnerships with parents

Academy procedures for recording and monitoring attendance

Strategic lead for attendance has been delegated to: Mr Andy Washbourne (Assistant Principal)

Attendance is monitored on a daily basis by: Form Tutors, Attendance Officer

Attendance is also tracked closely by: Pastoral leaders including Heads of Key Stage, Assistant Heads' of Key Stage and the Safeguarding & Attendance Manager.

Attendance is reported to: The form tutors, the pastoral team, senior leadership team and the Local Academy Council

Recording

Students should arrive at academy at **8.40am (first period begins at 8.45 am)**. The students should make their way to period 1 where the teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from academy. **Any late students should enter the academy through the main student entrance.** All staff need to be aware that any student arriving late **MUST** be registered for the purposes of fire regulations. The register must be taken by 9am. Persistent lateness will be challenged. The academy tracks late attenders by logging on our information system on that day. It is worth noting that if a student is 15 minutes late everyday this is equivalent to missing 10 days of school over the year.

The registers **officially** close at **9:00am** and any student arriving after this time will be marked with a U code for the session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the Attendance Officer as to whether to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence. If unauthorised the 'U' code will be used just the same as if the student were absent for the morning session. Parents should be aware that if a student reaches 10 'U' absences, there is the risk of a Penalty Notice being issued against them for poor attendance. Student attendance marks will be awarded at the discretion of the Attendance Officer. Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact either their form tutor, the Attendance Officer or their child's Head of Key Stage at an early stage to work together in resolving any problems. This is a positive move as the majority of times

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issues can be resolved. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the academy or the Parent/Carer may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed.

Procedures

The academy applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Parents/Carers know that students are expected to be in the academy every day; excellent attendance is expected as this supports the students in accessing all of their lessons therefore being able to achieve the best outcomes.
- In the event of absence/lateness, Parents/Carers should contact the Attendance Officer as soon as they are able to inform of the reasons for the absence using: **01543 224 700 and option 1**
- We will challenge any poor attendance particularly where minor issues are being prioritised over the student's education at the academy. If attendance falls below 90%, absence will only be authorised with medical evidence of illness. Please keep in contact with the Attendance Officer on these occasions.
- Students who arrive late will need to explain reasons for their lateness. If it is not an acceptable reason (decided by staff) they will be issued with a sanction. Students need to get into good habits of arriving on time to the academy.
- There will be consequences for those students who are regularly late through the Behaviour for Learning system.
- Parents/Carers should not arrange non-urgent medical and dental appointments during the academy day.
- Students who need to leave the academy during the day must have a note from Parents/Carers explaining the reasons for this. Permission will be granted (or refused) by their Head of Key Stage.
- For any unexplained absences the academy will contact parents who have not offered a reason and will mark the absence as unauthorised if no suitable reason is provided. **A reason for a period of absence is always required.** The Attendance Officer / Safeguarding and Attendance Manager / Pastoral leader or team member will also undertake home visits where reasons have not been gained, or to discuss where attendance is a concern.
- Letters are sent out to Parents/Carers if their child's attendance is drops under 96%. Their form tutor will contact Parents/Carers. Further letters from, the Attendance Officer, Safeguarding and Attendance Manager or pastoral leaders will follow if attendance does not improve. Parents/Carers will be asked to attend a meeting at the academy.
- All requests for leave of absences from the academy must be made in writing, however, Parents/Carers should be aware that leave of absence for holidays during term time will only be authorised in **exceptional** circumstances. Where the absence is unauthorised the academy will assess a student's attendance record and may submit a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice. Parents/Carers should avoid booking holidays until they have completed a Holiday in Term Time Application Form (Exceptional Circumstances).
- When a holiday request is refused, Parents/Carers are welcome to arrange a meeting with a member of Senior Leadership to discuss the reasons for refusal. The academy will be guided by Local Authority guidance in relation to term time leave of absence.
- Attendance is monitored by the form tutor, Attendance Officer and pastoral leaders on a daily basis. Reports are produced and shared with the Assistant Principal weekly.
- Tutors are also provided with information regarding their tutee's attendance and will
 - Have 1 to 1 conversations with students regarding strategies to improve their attendance.
 - Contact Parents/Carers if they notice patterns or would like to discuss a period of absence.
- If concerns about attendance persist then the academy will involve the Education Welfare Officer. Throughout this process, staff will be looking to identify and address reasons for attendance issues so that the student can return to the academy (with support if necessary) as quickly as possible.

Actions taken

Where students are identified as a concern in their attendance actions will be taken in the following circumstances:

- ❖ Below 97%-Tutor actions plus 1st letter of concern
- ❖ Below 94% Pastoral Leaders actions plus 2nd letter of concern



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- ❖ Below 90% Safeguarding and Attendance Manager actions plus 3rd letter of concern
- ❖ Attendance monitoring plans will be set up in conjunction with families

Maintaining excellent levels of attendance

- Reward certificates are awarded at the end of each term for students maintaining 100% attendance.
- Bronze, silver and gold star badges are awarded for consecutive terms of 100% attendance to those students who achieve this.
- Letters are sent to parents of those students who are maintaining excellent levels of attendance (above 96%).

Points to be considered

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence (where student attendance falls below 90%) that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing medical evidence. This can be in the form of appointment cards or letters, along with copies of any prescribed medication or a note from a medical professional. This is standard procedure for all schools and these guidelines are set for schools by the Department for Education.

Practicalities of Managing Medical/Illness Absence

- In most instances, students will have an informal discussion with the Attendance Officer on their return, to firstly ensure they are fit for school, offer support on any work they may have missed and then to further discuss the importance of attendance and the impact this can have on their education. Where possible, the Attendance Officer will liaise with the pastoral team to arrange any support where it is needed.
- If concerns are highlighted regarding the level of medical/illness absence that a student has incurred, contact will be made with the Parents/Carers to discuss it further and look at ways to support a student with medical conditions in school through the use of a Care Plan. Most medical conditions can be managed well within the academy and we have trained staff to provide support where appropriate.
- If still concerned the Attendance Officer will suggest that the student visit their GP or other health professional, if this has not already been done.
- Students and Parents/Carers will be invited to attendance meetings with the form tutor, Pastoral Leaders and/or the Safeguarding and Attendance Manager the Attendance Officer once their attendance becomes a concern.
- Parents/carers of students whose attendance at the end of each half term is below 90%, will be asked to attend a meeting with the Safeguarding and Attendance Manager to explore whether there are any underlying issues that may be contributing to their poor attendance which we are not already aware of.
- If Parents/Carers do not engage and all other efforts have been exhausted the academy will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO may pursue a Fixed Penalty Notice, whereby the Local Authority will instigate a time limited period of monitoring, offering a further period in which significant improvement must be demonstrated. We would very much hope that a good working relationship with our Parents/Carers will be established so that any penalties can be avoided. Parents/carers will understand that we have the child's best interests at heart and them building resilience and gaining a good education for the future, is incredibly important to us.
- Following investigation and close monitoring by the Local Authority, any unresolved issues could result in the Parent/Carer receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 section 444.

Persistent Absence (PA)

The academy is committed to reducing persistent absence (which is attendance less than 90% attendance) and has specific procedures for dealing with this. There are strong and proven links between student attendance and educational achievement. Attendance of less than 95% has been shown to compromise student attainment.



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An attendance of 90% is equivalent to missing 19 days or nearly 4 weeks from school in a year. Only 10% of students who are persistently absent from school achieve the equivalent of five 9-4 grades at GCSE. It has been found that if a school could improve its overall attendance by 1% it could see an improvement in attainment of around 5%.

The academy will inform the parents of concerns and offer support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a student from attending. Students falling to below 96% attendance will be monitored as to whether their attendance improves or deteriorates. The aim is to avoid a student falling behind in their work and failing to achieve the knowledge and skills they need to gain grades they are capable of.

Once a student is categorised as persistently absent, the Safeguarding and Attendance Manager and Pastoral Leaders will endeavour to work closely with a family and put in place appropriate support. The support will include targets and dates via attendance reports/plans, within which the student must demonstrate a significant improvement. Whilst we appreciate that some illnesses may be genuine, the academy has a duty to ensure we support students to be in as much as possible to gain the most benefit from the education they are offered, ultimately helping them to achieve a good academic base on which to commence their adult life.

On a termly basis the following number of sessions absent will result in a student being considered persistently absent:

By the end of half-term 1 (Autumn Term)	7+ sessions (3.5 days)
By the end of half-term 2 (Autumn Term)	14+ sessions (7 days)
By the end of half-term 3 (Spring Term)	20+ sessions (10 days)
By the end of half-term 4 (Spring Term)	26+ sessions (13 days)
By the end of half-term 5 (Summer Term)	31+ sessions (15.5 days)
By the end of half-term 6 (Summer Term)	38+ sessions (19 days)

1. PA data is consistently monitored to track and review attendance of PA students so that concerns can be addressed.
2. Half termly meetings are held with the EWO to discuss all students who have fallen within this category.
3. Parents/Carers, the child, the Assistant Principal and EWO are all spoken to about concerns relating to PA.
4. Actions are taken by EWO in line with Staffordshire County Council Policy.

Alternatively, Parents/Carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the academy and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the academy reception, further information regarding attendance to schools is found here: [Attendance - Staffordshire County Council](#)

The academy reserves the right to withdraw students from enrichment activities if attendance is poor, which may occur at short notice.