

Attendance Policy

Adopted by the Board of Trustees

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Trustee Reviewers: Julie Horton and Janet Jones

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1. General Data Protection Regulations



This policy has been reviewed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which will replace the Data Protection Act 1998 from 25th May 2018. The introduction of GDPR has resulted in changes to many existing data protection rules and regulations that educational establishments adhere to. The Evolve Trust has undertaken a full data protection audit and have ensured that appropriate changes that have been made to data protection rules and regulations have been adhered to in full. The Evolve Trust has carried out all additional compliance requirements and fully accepts their duty of care to ensure individuals' data is kept safe and secure, resulting in increased compliance in our systems, processes and policies.

2. Core statement

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of the academy and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. Regular attendance is a legal requirement. The academy aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents, local community and the Local Authority Early Help Unit can work in partnership. The academy will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. All staff will encourage good attendance and liaise with home and other agencies when this it is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the academy. The attendance policy operates within the context of equal opportunities for all.

‘Outstanding Attendance’ is considered to be 98% and above and ‘Good Attendance’ considered to be 96% and above. Anything below 96% is a cause for concern and below a ‘satisfactory’ level and this would trigger an investigation into the circumstances and a decision being made as to whether further action should be taken by the Academy.

Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be classed as a ‘Persistent Absentee’ in line with government classification. If their attendance falls to this level we may make a referral to Family Service who will work with the family to improve attendance or may take legal action where necessary. Pupils who meet this criteria will be monitored and if their attendance fails to improve a Penalty Notice fine may be issued.

The Academy target is to be above 96%.

3. Aims

- To improve the quality of school life and to create a culture in which good attendance is “normality”.
- To demonstrate to students, parents and staff that good attendance is valued by the Academy, and to recognise that regular attendance is an achievement within itself.
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions.
- To value the individual.

4. Objectives

- To secure real student involvement on attendance issues.
- To communicate effectively with parents in relation to attendance issues.
- To recognise and support the roles of staff in encouraging, promoting and monitoring good attendance.
- To achieve an effective working relationship with the Local Authority via the targeted support service.
- To set, monitor and review appropriate strategic objectives which are currently identified as whole school figures of 96% attendance and 98% punctuality.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The academy will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere,
- provide a safe learning environment,
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns,
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality,
- monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality,
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence,
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers,
- although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence,
- in the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.

The responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure the following:

- The child attends the academy regularly and on time;
- To contact the academy immediately if their child is going to be absent; on each day of absence. All absences must be explained in a parental note, which should then be given to the classroom teacher on the child's return to the academy.
- Absences of 5 days or more will require medical evidence. This can be a doctor's appointment card, prescription label, doctor's letter, hospital discharge letter etc. Failure to produce evidence following 5 or more days absence will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- To notify the Academy of any known absence in advance i.e. Medical appointments with evidence.
- Refrain from taking their child out of the academy in term-time. The academy does not authorise absence unless for medical purposes or exceptional circumstances. The academy will determine if an absence can be authorised and reserves the right to decline any request for absence that is deemed to be detrimental to a student's attendance and affect their education e.g. holidays.

6. Punctuality

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. Children should be lined up on the playground in time for entering school at 8.45am.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place at 8.45am and pupils who arrive after this will be recorded as late to school. If Children arrive after 9.15 lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

- Afternoon registration is taken at 12.50pm.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

7. Persistent lateness

Where a pupil is persistently late for 10 separate instances over a period of six school weeks and where these are signified as a "U" in the attendance register, the school can, at the discretion of the headteacher, request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices to each parent for each child to whom unauthorised absence applies.

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The penalty is set at £120 and should be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 21 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60.
- Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.
- All monies are collected by and retained by the Local Authority.

8. Reasons for absence

The Academy deem the following as ACCEPTABLE reasons for absence:

- Genuine illness – not minor ailments such as headache, hay-fever or sore throat!
- Medical appointments – doctors, dentist, orthodontist but please try to make appointments outside of school hours
- Bereavements

The Academy deem the following as UNACCEPTABLE reasons for absence:

- Holidays – the Academy does not automatically agree to give time off in term time
- Birthdays – You should come to school on your birthday and enjoy the day with your friends
- Shopping – this can be done after school or at weekends
- Babysitting

Holidays in term time/Leave of Absence:

- We understand that it is often more expensive to take a family holiday during the school breaks. The law says that parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. The Academy will not authorise term time holidays unless in exceptional circumstances and as authorised by the Executive Principal.
- Any Holiday request or leave of absence request should be submitted in writing to the Executive Principal with evidence to support your case (a form is available from reception).
- If your request for a term time holiday or other absence is refused and your child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and a penalty notice will be actioned.

9. Penalty Notice

As from January 2016, the academy introduced Penalty Notices in accordance with the Code of Practice and the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 to parents/carers whose child(ren) is/are either truanting from the Academy, absent from the Academy due to a holiday (above 7 sessions/ 3.5 days in total), attendance is below 90% or the student is found to be in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Any request for a Penalty Notice to be issued, will go through the Local Authority and any money received through the issuing of the Penalty Notice will go to the Local Authority and not the academy. The academy has put a range of interventions and support in place and works closely with parents and carers to improve low School attendance. However, if attendance does not improve after these procedures have been followed, the academy will then refer to the Local Authority who will implement their own procedures which may lead to an issuing of a Penalty Notice and court action.

The penalty is £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days, this reduces to £60 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against a Penalty Notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. This could lead to a fine of up to £1000 per parent per child.

The Local Authority will not issue more than 2 Penalty Notices per calendar year to any person taking more than 2 periods of unauthorised absence. Where further absences occur or where the Local Authority deem it appropriate enforcement will be dealt with directly by the court.

10. Rewards

Although the academy recognises the ultimate aim of achieving good attendance for its own intrinsic benefits, it appreciates the importance of recognising good attendance with appropriate rewards.

11. Reintegration

When long-term absentees return to school it is important that they are sympathetically treated by all staff. Re-integration often fails because it is unplanned; the pupil is sent back to his/her original timetable as if nothing has happened. Staff should be reminded to be sensitive, confine any remarks about the absence to 1:1 situations and to bear in mind the context of the attendance issue.

This plan will acknowledge the reasons for the pupil's absence, and may involve a reduced timetable in the first instance and temporary additional support. All staff who teach the pupil need to be advised in advance of an anticipated return so that they can plan how to re-introduce the pupil into their lessons. A risk assessment will be completed with the pupil where necessary.

12. Missing Children

The academy follows Nottinghamshire LA guidance on children who are/at risk of missing education.

Summary of Steps-

- Academy attempts to make contact no later than day 3, best practice day 1
- Days 0-10- Continue to try to make contact as appropriate

- Whereabouts known
 - Threshold met for Early help intervention- make referral
 - Child stays on roll
 - Enforcement action as required
- Whereabouts unknown
 - Referral made to Children Missing Officer (CMO) no later than 10th day when there
 - has been no contact
 - Do not remove from roll until CMO has completed checks and confirmed they can be
 - removed.