



**GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST**

**NEWARK HILL ACADEMY**

## **Attendance Policy**

<b>REVIEW PROCESS</b>	
REVIEWED	14.09.2020
REVIEW	14.09.2021

## **Introduction**

The Academy is committed to providing a full and effective education for all its pupils. The Academy strives to ensure that all pupils benefit from regular attendance and the education it provides. To this end, the Academy will do all it can to ensure that pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may impede full attendance are acted upon as quickly as possible.

## **Statutory Education**

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupils should be deprived of their educational opportunities by non-attendance.
- In the first instance it is the responsibility of parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>
- A small minority of pupils and their parents may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities and the Academy will aim to assist, with the help of external agencies if necessary.
- Most pupils want to attend in order to learn, to socialise with their peer groups and 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.
- All pupils are expected to attend the Academy every day that the school is open unless they are unable to do so because of illness or that there are exceptional circumstances which lead to an absence being authorised.
- In cases of illness medical evidence is requested in order that we can correctly code the registers.
- Since September 2013 Academy attendance regulations have changed under **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** which amends the existing 2006 regulations. As a result of the new government legislation Principals will no longer be able to allow any absence for the purpose of a holiday during term time. Any holiday in term time will be treated as unauthorised.
- The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend. Under this judgement, a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.
- The regulations do allow Principals to authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances”. Please find below a list of examples of allowable absences and those which will now be classed as unauthorised absences.

## **Allowed Absence**

- Sickness/illness.
- Emergency and planned medical appointments (parents are requested to make routine appointments outside school hours).
- Hospital scheduled appointments /treatment.
- Day/s for specific religious observance (up to two days).
- The Academy is closed due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Temporary exclusion.

## **Allowed absence in exceptional circumstances (authorised at the discretion of the Principal)**

- Immediate family bereavement or close friend bereavement.
- Other compassionate grounds.
- Immediate family wedding/civil partnership taking part on a school day.
- Family crisis.
- Examinations off site.
- Educational opportunity - sport and performance.
- Visit to a new school.
- Family re-location visit.
- It is at the Principal's discretion to determine the number of days a child can be away from the Academy if leave of absence is granted.

## **Absences not allowed under any circumstances (unauthorised)**

- Family holiday no matter what length.
- Family trips/attending concerts.
- Leaving early to travel to an event.
- Minding the house/looking after siblings.
- No evidence of an appointment with doctor/dentist.
- The Academy feels parental note is invalid.
- No explanation of absence is forthcoming.
- Birthdays.
- Shopping trips.
- Dropping siblings off.

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completing the 'Leave of Absence' form which can be obtained at the Academy office or downloaded from the Academy website. The Principal will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time.

Please be aware that the local authority has been given jurisdiction to impose fines for unauthorised absence and the Academy may be asked to report unauthorised absence.

For absence relating to illness of five days or more, the Academy may request a doctor's note to confirm the absence. We hope that parents will understand that we are bound by the changes in government legislation and make every effort to comply with the attendance regulations.

The Academy expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, which would then be authorised.

## **Expectations Relating to Attendance and Punctuality**

### **We expect the following from all our pupils:**

- They will attend the Academy every day unless illness prevents this.
- They will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- They will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending.
- They will arrive at the Academy wearing the correct uniform.

### **We expect the following from parents:**

- To ensure their children attend the Academy every day.
- To ensure that they contact the Academy at the start of the day whenever their child is unable to attend because of illness.
- To ensure their children arrive at the Academy well prepared for the day and in the correct uniform.
- To contact the Academy whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from the Academy.
- To ensure their child is collected promptly from the Academy and that the Academy is notified in writing if their child is permitted to walk home alone. The safeguarding procedures will be instigated if there is no contact with the parent and the child is still at the Academy one hour after the end of the day.
- To keep the Academy updated with changes of telephone numbers. There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number - if we do not, then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

## **Parents and pupils can expect the following from the Academy**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend the Academy without providing good reason.
- Prompt action on any problem notified to the Academy.
- Rewards to encourage good attendance.

### **Encouraging Attendance**

The following strategies are implemented to encourage and monitor attendance:

- Providing stimulating learning opportunities and an ethos in which all members of the Academy community are valued. This is the responsibility of every teacher working at the Academy.
- Providing security of learning and a safe environment in which to learn.
- Parents are informed at induction of the importance of regular attendance and are advised of the consequences of non-attendance.
- Certificates are awarded for 100% attendance with a pencil or pen awarded at the end of the year.
- Pupils with attendance of 95% or above will be given a certificate.
- Attendance is reported to parents three times each academic year.
- Regular monitoring of attendance takes place.
- The Academy works in partnership with the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service.

### **Responding to non-attendance**

When a pupil does not attend, the Academy responds by contacting home on the first day of absence if the absence has not already been reported. This measure is undertaken to ensure a child's safety. If this has not been possible then a letter home regarding the child's unexplained absence is sent asking for a parental response.

- The Academy is particularly concerned about any pupil's attendance which consistently fails to meet 90%. This situation will be deemed to be persistent absenteeism.
- Pupils with poor punctuality will also be monitored by the Wellbeing Lead or other senior member of staff.
- If attendance or punctuality falls below 95% during the half term the parents will be contacted by the Wellbeing Lead.
- The Academy office staff are responsible for first day telephone calls or texts, second day telephone calls or texts and the Wellbeing Lead is responsible for letters and home visits. They will also follow the Local Authority's safeguarding procedures regarding a pupil missing education.
- In continued non-attendance, the case will be discussed with the PCC Attendance Officer. This may, in appropriate cases, result in legal action.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be referred for legal action, if one has not been made at an earlier stage. Throughout, the Wellbeing Lead will meet with the Principal and PCC Attendance Officer in order to keep everyone informed.
- Rewards and consequences are in place and explanatory charts are displayed around the Academy. This information is also provided to parents.
- Academy attendance meetings take place each half term. Parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern, or pupils who have failed to improve their attendance following previous interventions, are invited to meet with the Wellbeing Lead and the PCC Attendance Officer.

### **Penalty Notices**

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met:

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of 10% or more within a period of any 8 school weeks (a maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year).
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions).
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contributing to a level of unauthorised absence at 10% or above.
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification.

- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

### **Re-integration**

- Returning to the Academy after long-term absence requires special planning; eg. pastoral support.
- The appropriate staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and 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 individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SENDCO may be required.

### **Academy organisation**

In order for the policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils, the importance of the education being provided. This means ensuring that staff arrive to lessons on time and are well prepared. In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff groups such as the following:

#### **Principal:**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To report to the Academy Advisory Council, pupils and parents.
- To ensure that challenging but achievable targets are set.
- To liaise with the Senior Leadership Team regarding attendance matters.
- To ensure the operation of the attendance system and the collation of attendance data is in place.
- To monitor the work of the Attendance Team or delegate this to a member of the SLT.

#### **Wellbeing Lead:**

The Wellbeing Lead works closely with teachers, pupils and their families. Whilst the priority will relate to attendance matters, other activities may include child protection, holidays in term time, child employment and children in entertainment and any other problems that prevent a young person benefiting fully from the educational opportunities available to them.

#### **SENDCO:**

The SEN Co-ordinator (SENDCO) plays a key role in determining the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the Academy in order to raise the achievement of children with SEN. The SENDCO takes day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEN policy and co-ordination of the provision made for individual children with SEN, working closely with staff, parents and carers, and other agencies. The SENDCO also provides related professional guidance to colleagues with the aim of securing high quality teaching for children with SEN.

### **Liaising with outside agencies**

Good relations and working practices are essential. Agencies have difficult roles in that they endeavour to support both the Academy in meeting its legal obligations as well as the family in ensuring that the pupil's educational opportunities are maximised to the full. Some parents need the support of these agencies so that they can fulfill their legal obligations to their children. The Academy will work with these agencies when appropriate.

Other agencies will be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Educational Psychologist.
- Special Educational Needs Disability Service.
- Children's Social Care.
- CAMHS.
- School Nurse Service

## **Punctuality**

The school day starts at 8.45am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 8.55am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

The issue of poor punctuality must be taken very seriously. When a pupil arrives late they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This reduces their chances of academic success. Poor punctuality can also cause social disruption – pupils may feel uncomfortable and embarrassed arriving to the classroom when everyone else is already settled. In fact, when one pupil arrives late it disrupts the teacher and the rest of the class, compromising everyone's learning.

### **Late Procedure**

- Any child arriving after 8.55am will need to be booked in through the main office.
- Time, date, name and lunch requirements are recorded.
- Children arriving after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised late mark.
- Late gating takes place weekly on random days, letters sent to any late child.
- If three late occurrences are recorded in a month letters are sent.
- In persistent cases of lateness occurring there will be involvement from the principal.
- Pupils who are persistently late after close of register may be referred to the PCC Attendance Officer or another outside agency for further action.

### **Deletions from Register**

- Under Section 8(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence, the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.
- This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8(h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and
  - (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);
  - (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;