



Attendance policy

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Current Context

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'

The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence. This policy has been updated in line with DFE 'School Attendance' guidance (August 2020)

Parent/carers* are expected to perform their **legal duty** by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time".

*Definition of parent/carer: Section 576 of the Education Act 1996

A parent/carer in relation to any child or young person, includes any person who is:-

- a) a natural parent or carer, whether they are married or not;
- b) not a parent/carer but who has parent/carer responsibility for him/her; or
- c) responsible for the care of him/her

This also includes all absent parent/carers who must have regular contact and an ability to influence the child including his/her attendance (separated parent/carers who do not accompany the other parent/carer on the unauthorised leave should not be included). Parent/carer partners can be included (whether or not they are married or the natural parent/carer of the child as they have 'care' of the child. If a pupil lives with a grandparent/carer or older sibling as their main carer they can also be included as they are the main care provider.

It is also important to note that even though a parent/carer may not live in the same home as the pupil that parent/carer is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day

1. Aims

At Summit Learning Trust, we believe that excellent attendance and punctuality are important in helping pupils achieve the best that they can be. Education is important. Pupils should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. All research shows that pupils who attend well achieve well.

Our academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to academy attendance by:

- Promoting excellent, 100% attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parent/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and we will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Good attendance (at least 97%) is essential to the learning, achievement and well-being of all pupils, and particularly for those pupils with SEND and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds, looked after children and for those who have had previously disrupted education.

2. Legislation and guidance

The 1996 Education Act (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by 'regular' attendance at school or 'otherwise'. The 2008 Education and Skills Act (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

The duty on parents/carers is to ensure that their children are educated, either at school or 'otherwise'. Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of 'otherwise' children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, i.e. – FE colleges from the age of 14, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents/carers to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and 'suitable' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. **(DFE guidance – August 2020)**

This policy meets the requirements of the [academy attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [academy attendance parent/careral responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern academy attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [academy census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Academy procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all academies (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the morning session of each academy day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date in which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in academy by 8:45am on each academy day.

3.2 Absence from school

Parent/carers must notify the academy on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible.

To report an absence parent/carers should contact the attendance team via the main office on 0121 464 4293.

Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made by the parent/carer the school will determine if the absence is to be **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

Parents/ carers are reminded that by law, only the academy Principal can make the decision to authorise an absence.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

The school will only **authorise** a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school has the right to request medical evidence if a parent/carer rings the school to confirm the pupil is unwell: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence

Where it is not possible for medical / dental appointments to be made out of academy hours, the pupil should be out for the minimum amount of time necessary, and be in attendance prior to their appointment / or return afterwards.

To report an upcoming medical or dental appointment parent/carers should contact the attendance team on 0121 464 4293.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

The 1996 Education Act requires that every pupil should attend school and be on time. It is better to be late than not to be in school at all, **BUT** when pupils arrive late it makes it difficult for everyone. The teacher has to stop and wait for the latecomer to settle down, the rest of the class is disrupted, and the latecomer misses the, often vital, first part of the lesson.

Persistent lateness to school does have a significant impact on a child's learning and overall attainment, as outlined below:

Pupil is late to school 5 minutes each day = 3.4 days of learning lost during the academic year

Pupil is late to school 10 minutes each day = 6.9 days of learning lost during the academic year

Pupil is late to school 15 minutes each day = 10.3 days of learning lost during the academic year

Pupil is late to school 20 minutes each day = 13.8 days of learning lost during the academic year

Pupil is late to school 30 minutes each day = 20.7 days of learning lost during the academic year

If you are aware your child will be arriving late, please send them with a note explaining the circumstances or contact the school by telephone, i.e. - unplanned appointment at the doctors.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupil punctuality at Pegasus Primary School is carefully monitored by the Inclusion Team.

If pupils are persistently late to school following the closure of the register, then unauthorised absence procedures may apply.

3.5 Following up absence

The academy will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Unauthorised absences will be challenged initially by our attendance team to ascertain reasons for this absence. If this is unsuccessful members of our wider attendance team including where necessary, our Educational Welfare Officers will contact parent/carers for further clarification. Please be aware that Pegasus Primary School, works closely with Birmingham City Council in applying their legal processes and penalty notices may be issued accordingly.

3.6 Reporting to parent/carers

Parent/carers will receive a termly attendance update for their child with a clear, colour coded indication of whether expected targets are being met.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Authorised absence codes are noted within appendix i. pages 10 and 11 of this policy.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. These are an **offence** by the parent/carer. The circumstances noted below is not an exhaustive list, and may include:

- A pupil not attending school to go shopping for school clothes
- A pupil not attending school as it is her birthday or the birthday of a family member
- A pupil not attending school as the family have gone to the airport to meet a visiting relative
- A pupil not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member
- A pupil not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday or event in another part of the country
- A pupil not attending school as they are looking after younger siblings
- A pupil attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons

However, the Principal will take specific circumstances into account and use their discretion to determine if an absence is to be unauthorised. It is important that parents/carers notify the school in advance of an absence, and where possible, seek the Principal's authorisation.

Unauthorised absence codes are noted within appendix i. pages 12 and 13 of this policy.

5. Safeguarding

The school reserves the right to invite parents/carers into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, i.e. – female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation, mental health. This may be the case particularly if a parent/carer requests a leave of absence during term time.

In addition, if the school suspects that a pupil may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, i.e. – social care (CASS), police. The school will inform parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

Children Missing From Education

The school recognises that when a child goes missing from school it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, i.e. – sexual abuse or exploitation. Pegasus Primary School follows the local authority procedures “Identifying and maintaining contact with children missing or at risk of going missing from Education 2013”. Under section 8h of the Education Regulations Act (2006) the school will make ‘reasonable’ enquiries into the location of pupils with 5 days continuous unauthorised absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time. A referral will be made to ‘Child Missing from Education’ (CME) to be investigated further by their safeguarding panel and appropriate interventions taken at that level, i.e. – refer to police.

The academy reserves the right to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children’s Social Care, Police Safe and Well-being referral, CME) if any child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents/carers.

Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents/carers to ensure a child is safe and well, including home visits by school staff / Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The school will contact relevant agencies after two days of absence without confirmation from parents / carers if the child is subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan or considered vulnerable in other ways.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, as outlined below;

- Child is at risk of harm / neglect (school will follow standard Child Protection procedures for referrals to social care / police)
- Children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families (school will inform local authority when a GRT student leaves the school without identifying a new destination school.
- Families of Armed Forces (school will contact MOD Children’s Education Advisory Service for advice on making arrangements for continuity of education)
- Missing children / runaways (direct referral to Children’s Services and Police)
- Children supervised in the Youth Justice system
- Children who cease to attend a school

Concerns:

Sometimes a child may seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends, are being bullied or feel anxious returning to school after a period of absence and are fearful of being in lessons with other pupils. If this is the case, please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to the relevant member of staff. In any of these circumstances, we will work closely with you and your child to address the concerns and put relevant support measures in place. This may involve working with our SENDCO, staff in the Inclusion Team and the class teacher or accessing support from appropriate external agency.

Home Education

Under the DFE guidance on attendance (August 2020); 'Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at a school'. If a parent wishes to withdraw a child from the school, the child will be known as 'Electively Home Educated'. Any parent/carer wishing to withdraw their child from the academy will be contacted by the academy's attendance team to discuss their wishes and will be provided with an information pack. Parents/carers will be required to confirm their decision in writing to the Principal. The school will forward this letter to the Local Authority and the child will be removed from the Admission register at Pegasus Primary School. The Local Authority will then determine whether or not to accept this new arrangement or challenge it. However, parents are unable to withdraw their child from school if they are subject to a 'School Attendance Order'.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can be home educated. Where the EHCP sets out special educational provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. The local authority must review the child's EHC Plan annually.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Academies are legally bound to escalate persistent absenteeism to their Local Authority which can result in a penalty notice to be issued to parents / carers via the relevant local authority for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. A penalty notice can also be issued for each child of compulsory school age within a family whom are not attending school, and to each parent / carer with legal responsibility (see definition pg1). If further referrals / penalty notices occur the level of fine can significantly increase. Failure to pay the penalty fixed notice can result in a custodial sentence.

Please see links below for specific local authority School Attendance and Review Meetings and escalation processes;

Birmingham:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/13560/birmingham_city_council_education_prosecution_policy_2019

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/442/school_attendance_and_absence_advice_for_schools

Solihull:

https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/StrategiesPlansPolicies_Education-Enforcement-Code-of-Conduct.pdf

https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/StrategiesPlansPolicies_Leave-of-absence-policy.pdf

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Schools-and-learning/School-attendance>

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

“One of the most effective ways that schools can improve achievement is by improving attendance. Even the very best teachers struggle to raise the standards of children who are not in school regularly. Schools that relentlessly pursue good attendance get better overall attainment”

Charlie Taylor. Government Advisor.

Good attendance is rewarded regularly through certificates awarded in the weekly celebration assembly, termly attendance prizes, 100% attendance certificates and prizes at the end of the academic year.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer/team monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parent/carers are expected to call the academy in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Should communication not be made by parents/carers by 9:00am we will make a 'day 1 phone call' to discuss the reasons for this absence.

If after contacting parent/carers a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving our wider attendance and pastoral team and escalating to the education welfare service.

The academy has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. **Pupils with attendance below 90% fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category.** This is particularly relevant if any of the child's absences are unauthorised.

The academy may also consider implementing an **attendance plan** if a pupil continues to be absent from school without authorisation. An **attendance plan** is an agreement between the school and parent, and will contain improvement targets with set timescales and an overview of the support provided by the school to support the child and their family. Parental failure to comply with the plan may be used as evidence if the Local Authority decides to prosecute parents.

Early Help will also be offered to all families in support of wider circumstances that they may be experiencing which is impacting on their child/ren's attendance and/or punctuality.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Trust Board and the Local Governing Body.

The academy will collect and store attendance data via the Management Information System (MIS) Arbor. Data will be analysed, monitored and evaluated to track the attendance patterns of:

- Individual pupils
- Groups of pupils (including boys, girls, SEND, ethnic minority background, age group, those in receipt of additional funding)

These analyses will inform the academy's interventions with pupils and groups of pupils, and parent/carers, to support improved attendance.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole Academy Trust on at least a termly basis. It scrutinises how effectively this policy is put in place, and reports the impact of the policy to the Board of Trustees.

8.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the academy, and for monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the LGB.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requesting fixed penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 The Attendance Lead/Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the academy and at individual pupil, and group level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Carries out safe and well home visits
- Arranges calls and meetings with parent/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to request fixed-penalty notices and explore possible solutions
- Provides weekly updates to all staff about the attendance figures for pupils and groups
- Co-ordinates wellbeing support, strategies, assessments and referrals to external agencies including; Early Help and social, emotional and mental health services
- Provides evaluation of the impact of actions taken to improve attendance and punctuality
- Provides half termly up-to-date analysis of attendance trends and patterns for leaders, the LGB, Education Directors and external scrutiny groups

8.4 Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The academy may consider requesting a home visit and/or involvement from our external education welfare service if attendance continues to be of concern, or where the academy staff are unable to make timely contact with parents/cares in case of pupil absence.

The EWS is also used in assisting the academy in discharging its safeguarding responsibilities. The EWS can mediate between home and academy where issues may be impacting on a pupil's attendance.

8.5 Class teachers /Form Tutors

Class teachers and Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes. All staff are responsible for promoting and encouraging good attendance through their daily interactions with pupils and through the provision of high quality teaching. Class teachers / Form Tutors have a pivotal role in monitoring and improving attendance through their relationships with pupils and their families, tutoring work, and the robust implementation of rewards systems for good attendance.

8.6 Office staff

Office staff are often the first port of call when taking calls from parent/carers about; reasons for pupil absence, forwarding messages on and recording details on to the academy system.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Education Directors and Inclusion Director (overall policy) and Principals / Attendance Leads (local adjustments for context). At every review, the policy will be shared with the LGB.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Birmingham City Council Education Enforcement Code of Conduct.

Appendix I: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on academy attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the academy
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment or entrance exam
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity i.e. training sessions, trials, event approved by the academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip including residential trips organised, or approved, by the academy
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	<p>Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made</p> <p>If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they will be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision will be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they will be marked using the appropriate attendance code.</p>
H	Authorised holiday	<p>Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances</p> <p>Principals should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the pupil must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the principal will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.</p>
I	Illness	<p>Academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness</p> <p>Illness (not medical or dental appointments) We will authorise absences due to illness (physical or mental health) unless we have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, we will request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. We will record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness and will advise parents in such cases. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.</p>
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

		Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Therefore, we encourage parents/carers to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Medical evidence will be required prior to the appointment.
R	Religious observance	<p>Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance</p> <p>We will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parent's/carers religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance, in this instance the academy will only authorise one-day absence for religious events.</p>
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	<p>Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy</p> <p>If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.</p>
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

O	Unauthorised absence	Academy is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	<p>Pupil arrived at academy after the register closed</p> <p>If a pupil arrives after 9:00am without any written or verbal confirmation from parents/carers to explain their lateness, the school will mark the pupil with the U code. This means that, although the pupil is in school, they are marked absent for the entire morning. This will be marked as an authorised absence and could result in prosecution for parents/carers if the pupil is persistently late.</p>

Academy Discretionary Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in academy	Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy site is closed or part of it, due to an unavoidable cause, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, adverse weather i.e. snow, the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance or the pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the academy
#	Planned academy closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/Bank holiday/INSET day

The academy has a legal responsibility to promote good attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Academy staff are committed to working collaboratively with parents/carers to ensure that pupils have a high level of attendance.