



Wise Owl Trust

Attendance Policy (pupils)

Version 1

Approved by Wise Owl Trust: January 2017

Due for review: January 2018

Introduction

For a child to fulfil their educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. School attendance is subject to Education Laws and this policy is written within this context.

This policy will aim to:

- Demonstrate a strong attendance ethos
- Have a clear policy on absence
- Have effective, non-bureaucratic systems for monitoring attendance
- Use attendance data and other information to improve academy and pupil performance
- Promote the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- Intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern
- Have support systems in place for vulnerable pupils
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance
- Make best use of additional support for pupils and parents/carers with greatest need

Legal Interventions

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and respond to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance or school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from the academy for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve



Empathy

Excellence

Empathy

Excellence

Resilience Passion

Self-Aware

Resilience

Passion Self-Aware

Communication

Teamwork

Communication

Teamwork

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Categorising Absence

Absence can only be authorised by the academy and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents/carers should advise the academy by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the academy with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer.

Illness

Parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the academy day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend the academy for part of the day. Parents/carers should show the appointment card to the academy to confirm the appointment.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Leave of Absence

Leave of absence will not be granted during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The principle should determine the number of academy days a child can be away from school if the leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted.

Religious Observance

Wise Owl Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognizes that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside the academy holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorizing absence or special leave for religious observance.

Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

It is reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorized as unauthorised. In such cases the academy may request that a Penalty Notice is issued.

Traveller Absence



The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend the academy as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (ie 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending the academy as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be education outside the school system.
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than 4 months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where s/he has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil

The Academy's at Wise Owl Trust will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing in Education protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown

Key Roles and Responsibilities

At Old Hall Drive Academy:

- Denise Hughes is the Senior Lead for attendance under the supervision of the Principal, Ms H Brooker and the Governing Body who retain overall responsibility

At Briscoe Lane Academy:

- Lisa Marks is the Senior Lead for attendance under the supervision of the Principal, Mrs C Hall and the Governing Body who retain overall responsibility.

At Seymour Road Academy:

- Louise DeCoursey is the Senior Lead for attendance under the supervision of the Principal Ms J Dennis and the Governing Body who retain overall responsibility.

The day-to-day responsibility for managing attendance issues lies with the attendance officer:



- Denise Hughes – Old Hall Drive Academy
- Lisa Marks – Briscoe Lane Academy
- Louise DeCoursey – Seymour Road Academy

Attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and DfE annually through the census and to the Governing Body termly. This information is collected through the SIMS system.

The **Senior Leadership Team** will ensure there is a whole Academy approach to improving attendance and reinforcing excellent attendance by:

- Disseminating the Attendance Policy to all staff
- Reviewing the Attendance Policy annually and updating all staff at regular meetings
- Ensuring the academy has in place strategies for collecting and analysing the attendance data
- Ensuring the attendance team receives support, guidance and the appropriate resources to fulfil its day-to-day duties
- Promoting the importance of good attendance to parents, carers and pupils through regular whole academy letters and other communications sent home
- Taking an active role in the school walking bus
- Seeking to promote the importance of attendance to pupils, parents and carers, during assemblies and at parents events
- Ensuring a safe and structured learning environment for all pupils
- Delivering informative lessons that are set to pupils' needs
- Providing approximate extracurricular activities

The **Attendance Lead** will support excellence attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole academy attendance
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance
- Managing individual pupil casework files
- Co-ordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern
- Carrying out 1st day calling and text messaging
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole academy initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies and the Local Authority as required

The **Teaching and Support Staff** will support and promote excellent attendance by:

- Highlighting to the Senior Leadership Team any pupils causing concern at termly Pupil Progress meetings
- Talking to their class about the importance of attendance
- Promoting whole academy initiatives, reward schemes such as classes receiving vouchers for 100% attendance and celebrating school trips
- Promoting good attendance in the weekly newsletter
- Delivering a diverse curriculum in a child centered learning environment



Parents have a very important part to play in supporting their children's education. In order to secure their child's regular and punctual attendance parents are expected to:

- Talk to their child about the academy and take a positive interest in their child's progress
- Ensure children attend the whole school day by collecting at the academy school closing time
- Instil the value regular and punctual attendance has within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the academy when their child is absent providing a reason and expected date of return
- Avoid unnecessary absences such as family holidays and wherever possible make appointments for the doctor, dentist etc out of school hours
- Ensuring their child attends punctually everyday
- Engaging with intervention strategies provided by the academy if their child's attendance becomes highlighted as a cause for concern
- Ask the academy for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing their bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Provide supporting medical evidence for absences whenever requested to do so by the academy
- Engage with intervention strategies if their child's attendance and/or punctuality is highlighted as a cause for concern

Pupils will be expected to support excellent attendance by:

- Attending every day
- Being on time and ready for registration every day
- Monitoring own attendance levels and being aware of their current band
- Speaking to adults if situations arise that may have a negative impact on their attendance
- Cooperating with interventions and support when offered
- Adhering to consistent bedtime routines, completing homework in good time and making sure equipment is ready the evening before where age appropriate

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Updating the whole academies community about attendance matters through newsletters and website
- Celebrating good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Rewarding achievements through class competitions, certificates and extra-curricular activities
- A whole academy integrated reward initiative
- A banding system which identifies levels of intervention and concern

- 96% + = Green
- 94% - 95.9% = Amber



- 90% - 93.9% = Red
- 89.9% and below = Red + (PA – Persistent Absence)

Strategies for talking unsatisfactory attendance

- First day calling procedure and text messaging
- Standardised and escalating series of the academies warning letters
- Home visits
- Tailored pastoral support and Individual Action Plans
- Referral to support agencies
- Case working of identified pupils/families
- Attendance Panel meetings
- Referral to School Nurse where medical issues are a concern
- Parenting contracts with agreed targets
- Issuing of Penalty Notices and referral to Local Authority for consideration of implementing of legal proceedings

Absence procedures

If a child is unavoidably absent from school the parent must:

- Contact the academy by phone as soon as possible on the first day of absence identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return
- Send a written note on the first day of return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even after you have telephoned us

If a child is absent from school we will:

- Send a text message, or make a telephone call to establish a reason

In certain circumstances, we may also:

- Visit your home
- Invite you to discuss the situation at the academy
- Issue a Penalty Notice and/or legal proceedings warning letter
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency or the Local Authority
- Request medical evidence in the form of a prescription or Doctors note

Whole Academy Target

All Academies at the Wise Owl Trust hold an aspirational target of 96% for pupil attendance and will strive towards achieving this, as attendance is the key to effective schooling and unlocking the true potential of each and every child.

