

## **22.1 Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Policy Version Control**

**V13**

Policy type	Trust Policy for Academies
Policy prepared by	J Cope
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## 1. Policy Aim

This policy is designed to support good attendance and punctuality across the Alpha Academies Trust. Educational research shows a strong correlation between 96% attendance and high achievement.

## 2. Relationship to Guidelines, Procedures, Other Policies & Legal Requirements

The Trust expects high standards of attendance and behaviour with all students aiming for their personal best. Students achieve high levels of success when parents and the Academy work together and aim for the same goals. The Trust is committed to working in a partnership of students, staff and parents to promote the achievement of all students.

The Trust will meet statutory requirements on traveller absence - section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996.

Please refer to the attached 'What we Do' documents that specifically relate to each Academy within the Trust.

## 3. Policy Statements

### 3.1 Principles:

- Parents/carers are legally required to ensure the regular, punctual attendance of their child, both at the Academy and at any off-site provision each day.
- Parents/carers recognise the value of good attendance and punctuality, not only to take full advantage of the opportunities offered at the Academy but also in preparation for working life to follow.
- Students should attend every day, unless there is a valid reason (proof may be required), and they should arrive punctually, wearing the Academy dress code and with all the equipment they need for the day. Attendance at the morning form tutorial is essential to ensure that students are fully prepared for the day ahead.

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- Children that attend nursery to Year 4 must be brought to the Academy and collected by someone aged 16 or over.
- Each Academy has a responsibility to provide a positive daily learning experience for every student to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Each Academy will actively pursue the goal of regular attendance and punctuality, both in relation to individual students and for the Academy as a whole, including recognising and rewarding good attendance and punctuality.
- If attending before and after school care, all pupils must be brought to the club and collected by someone aged 16 or over

### 3.2 Reporting an Absence

When a student is absent, parents should inform the Academy by telephoning the absence line on each day of their child's absence. We expect that students will return to the Academy as soon as possible.

The Academy also reserves the right to ask to see some form of medical evidence before deciding whether to authorise the absence or not. The decision to authorise an absence or not, lies solely with the Academy.

Likewise, Academy personnel have a duty to assess the condition of any child who is thought to be unwell and to contact the parent/carer requesting the child should be collected from the Academy and taken home. We do not approve of allowing students to make their own way home if they are ill, this includes sending a student home in a taxi. The student should be picked up from the Academy by an appropriate adult.

If attendance is a concern, then the Academy will endeavour to keep the student in the Academy if at all possible.

### 3.3 Authorised Absence

A student's absence may be authorised by designated staff in the Academy if:

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- The student is genuinely ill.
- The student is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause e.g. bereavement.
- The absence occurs on a day set aside for religious observance by the religion to which the student's parents belong. This absence is authorised for one day only.
- The student has a medical appointment or an interview approved by the Academy (evidence of such appointments may be asked for).
- The student is taking part in approved work experience or alternative provision.
- The student is suspended from the Academy.

### 3.4 Unauthorised Absence

A student's absence will not be authorised if not outlined above.

Examples of unauthorised absences can include the following:

- The student arrives 30 minutes or more after the register has closed. Please see appendices for individual academies registration times.
- The student is minding the house/looking after young children or other relatives.
- The student is shopping during the Academy day.
- The student is celebrating a non-religious occasion, e.g. birthday.
- The student takes further time off following a medical appointment or interview without appropriate evidence.
- The student is absent from a work experience location or alternative provision without good reason.
- The student is on family holiday unless this is due to exceptional circumstances.
- Student attendance is a concern or falls below Government guidelines.
- Medical evidence has been asked for and not supplied.

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### 3.5 Special Circumstances Leave of Absence

This may be granted by the Principal in exceptional circumstances. If a student does not return by the agreed date and contact is not maintained with the Academy, the student's name will be removed from the Academy roll after 20 continuous Academy days of unauthorised absence and the parent/carer notified at their last confirmed address. A child missing education submission will be made by the Academy to the Authority after all necessary checks have been made.

If the student subsequently returns, they will need to reapply for a place at the Academy through the normal mid-term admissions process. There is no guarantee that a place will be available at the Academies attached to our trust.

### 3.6 Term Time Leave under Exceptional Circumstance

We require parents to observe the term times of the Academy. The Academy will only authorise leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. If parents wish to request leave of absence during term time, a leave of absence request must be submitted to the Academy at least four weeks in advance of the proposed absence. In exceptional circumstances the period of notice may be reduced but should nevertheless be at least two working days' written application prior to the proposed absence. If the Academy grants a leave request, we will determine the length of time that the student is authorised to be away from the Academy. Working together to improve school attendance Framework September 2024 states that: Any leave of absence over 5 days will automatically result in a penalty notice and a fine of £80 being issued by the local authority. Should a further leave of absence taken in a three-year period a penalty notice of £160 per child, per parent will be issued by the local authority. Should a third leave of absence be taken in any three-year period this will result in automatic court action and a fine of up to £2500.

These new guidelines will apply even if your absence in term time has been booked prior to September 2024.

If a student is absent without notice and this absence is believed to be a holiday (leave of absence during term time), evidence will be needed, to prove that this is not the case, or it will be referred to the Local Authority for further action.

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If you take your child out of the Academy after the term time leave has not been granted this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may be referred to the Local Authority and the following actions may be applied:

- First offence: A Penalty Notice payable of a £80 or £160 fine per child, per parent.
- Second Offence: (within 3 years) A Penalty Notice payable of a £160 fine per child, per parent.
- Third Offence (within 3 years) Automatic court proceeding and a fine of up to £2500 per child per parent.
- These new guidelines will apply regardless of whether your absence in term has been booked before September 2024.
- If you feel that a Penalty notice has been issued in error then you may appeal to the Head of the Academy and if your appeal is successful, the Head will ask the Local Authority to withdraw the Penalty notices.
- The Local Authority issues Penalty Notices on behalf of the Academies in our Trust and so cannot withdraw them unless we instruct them to do so.

### 3.7 Traveller Absence

The special position of traveller families is recognised by section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996. The Trust will meet statutory requirements on traveller absence.

### 3.8 Monitoring Absence

The Senior Leaders will monitor, track and agree interventions for improving attendance across the Academy. Responsibility for monitoring attendance will be delegated to the Attendance Manager/personnel supported by the Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year and designated attendance staff. The designated senior leader (Senior Attendance Champion) (**Appendix contains contact details for each academy**) will have overall responsibility for ensuring that all statutory returns are completed and the annual attendance target is met.

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The Attendance Manager/Personnel and the Pastoral Team will:

- Monitor levels of authorised and unauthorised absences in each Form Tutor/class group.
- Monitor attendance during the Academy day to ensure no post-registration truancy.
- Set realistic targets for attendance for each student in line with the Academy's KPI's. These targets are reset each half term to allow every student the opportunity to gain rewards.
- Promote excellent attendance of both individuals and Form Tutor group through the use of praise, rewards, consequences and sanctions.
- Publish and publicise attendance successes.
- Ensure letters, texts and emails are used to inform parents/carers promptly of concerns over a child's attendance.
- Ensure that contact is made with the home on the first day of any absence which has not been accounted for.
- Ensure we have at least two contact numbers on the system for different adults.
- When appropriate to do so a home visit will be conducted when contact cannot be made on the first day of absence. Supportive and Proactive home visits may take place to support students to improve their attendance.
- The Academy will contact the relevant services if there are concerns for a child's safety or whereabouts following on from a home visit, or if no subsequent contact is made with the family.
- Ensuring supportive intervention are utilised to support all student's attendance.

### 3.9 Persistent Absence below 90% & Severe Absence below 50%

A number of students have persistently high absence rates. These students will be identified by the Pastoral Team and referred for additional support. The Academy has a dedicated Attendance Manager and/or personnel to work with families and the Academy to determine areas of concern, agree courses of action and ensure clear records are kept of progress made. The particular categories that will normally be pursued are:

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- Students with long-term absence.
- Students who show patterns of absence.
- Students who rarely complete a full week.
- Students whose Parents condone their child's absences.
- Students whose attendance falls below the Government's expectation of 96%.

The Trust works closely with the Education Welfare Service and will formally refer any student to the Education Welfare Service if Academy based actions have not resulted in improved attendance. The Education Welfare Service may pursue legal action which could include the use of penalty notices or proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

### 3.10 Severe absence below 50%

A number of students have severely high absence rates. These students will be identified by the Pastoral Team and referred for additional support. The Academy has a dedicated Attendance Manager and/or personnel to work with families and the Academy to determine areas of concern, agree courses of action and ensure clear records are kept of progress made. The particular categories that will normally be pursued are:

- Students with long-term absence.
- Students who show patterns of absence.
- Students who rarely complete a full week.
- Students whose Parents condone their child's absences.
- Students whose attendance falls below the Government's expectation of 96%.

The Trust works closely with the Education Welfare Service and will formally refer any student to the Education Welfare Service if Academy based actions have not resulted in improved attendance. The Education Welfare Service may pursue legal action which could include the use of penalty notices or proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

If a student is severely absent a referral to the newly LA created 'severely absent monitoring intervention panel' once all internal interventions have been exhausted.

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If a student is severely absent (below 50%) due to a medical condition or mental health issues the academy will refer these students to the Multi-Agency Medical Panel (MAMP) for assessment and guidance on ensuring the student has a suitable provision.

Or

If a student has 15 days of absence for the same medical condition or mental health issues the academy will refer these students to the Multi-Agency Medical Panel (MAMP) for assessment and guidance on ensuring the student has a suitable provision.

### 3.11 Punctuality

A member of the senior leadership team, attendance officer and pastoral team, will monitor students' punctuality and ensure detentions are issued for any student who is late, informing parents/carers of any action taken. Daily records will be kept of students who arrive late.

Parents are required to contact the Academy to explain any lateness after the register closes in the same way as they would for any other type of absence. On receipt of the information provided by parents, individual Academies will decide whether or not the absence should be categorised as authorised or unauthorised.

Students can be referred to the Education Welfare Service for persistent lateness.

- All students are expected to be in the Academy and ready to learn in accordance with the individual Academy start time.
- Any student arriving after this time but before 9:30am without evidence of a valid reason will receive an L mark and will be subject to Academy sanctions.
- Any student arriving after 9:30am without evidence of a valid reason will receive a U mark for that session. A 'U' mark constitutes an unauthorised absence and affects a student's overall attendance.
- Parents can face the issuing of a Penalty Notice for persistent lateness or indeed be prosecuted under section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

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Excellent punctuality will be rewarded in the same way as excellent attendance.  
The Academies will:

- Promote good punctuality of both individual students and whole classes through the use of rewards.
- Publicise punctuality successes.
- Provide termly rewards for 100% attendance and punctuality

### 3.12 Lunchtime Arrangements

Students are not allowed to leave the Academy site during lunchtime.

### 3.13 Role of Staff

All staff are aware that attendance is a whole school responsibility.

All Staff will:

- Staff are welcoming to students ensuring each student has a calm and safe environment.
- Encourage students to attend the Academy each day on time and to be in registration or assembly with a positive attitude to learning.
- Challenge students that are seen arriving late.
- Question students when they are aware that they have had an absence and let them know that they have been missed.
- Monitor the circulation of students in all areas of the Academy.
- Register their teaching groups accurately.
- Operate towards the KPI's of the Academy.
- Support attendance initiatives.
- Follow the academies 'Attendance What We do'.

Form Tutors or Primary Class teachers will:

- Promote excellent attendance.
- Have a legal responsibility to accurately record students at morning registration.
- Alert the attendance/pastoral team of any attendance or punctuality concerns as they develop and certainly before they become deep-seated.

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- Discuss with their Form group/class their attendance performance each week compared to other form groups or classes.
- Have an area in their Form room/classroom designated for attendance to update and display the weekly attendance data.

### 3.13 Role of Academy Sponsors & Governing Body

The Governing Body will receive attendance data annually to check that statutory targets have been met. Interim monitoring will be undertaken by the Senior Leader responsible for attendance and will report to the Governing Body termly. The Academy will ensure that:

- Attendance data is collected and published in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Attendance data is presented to the Trust & Governing Body meetings as required for monitoring purposes.
- The Trust & Governors support the Academies in developing positive strategies in order to improve attendance.
- Information on attendance procedures is readily available to parents and carers.
- The Attendance & Punctuality Policy is regularly reviewed and updated in line with current legislations.
- There is a named Governor who has responsibility for attendance. This Governor will be made aware of any issues and concerns regarding attendance and will be invited to attend any meetings where attendance is discussed.

The Academy trust board and governing body will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil the expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

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**4. Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually and any recommendations for improvement will be made as required.

**Approval**

Approved by the Chief Executive Officer

Signed: *Simon French*

(Chief Executive Officer)

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Linked to: What To Do's for each Academy

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