

The Academy for Character and Excellence

Attendance Policy

Reference: TP/WP/Curriculum and Standards

Policy date	June 2018	Statutory Policy - Yes
Strategic Board Approval	July 2018	
Reviewed and Updated	June 2018 Sept 2019	
Next Review Date	June 2021	Review cycle every 2 years
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MAT Schools	Redhills Primary Shaldon Primary Collaton St Mary Galampton Primary Totnes St John's	

Who should use this policy?

This policy will apply to all parents of children attending any school within the Academy for Character and Excellence in relation to legislative and Trust attendance requirements for their children.

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless significant legislative changes occur before the review date.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Trust is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, punctual, daily attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. See Appendix A.
- 1.2. The Trust actively promotes and encourages 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils. We recognize that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.
- 1.3. If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

2. Legislation

- 2.1. The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full- time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
- 2.2. The government expects:
 - a. Schools and local authorities 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.
 - b. Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
 - c. All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.
- 2.3. These requirements are contained in:
 - a. The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
 - b. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
 - c. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
 - d. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
 - e. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
 - f. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

3. What you can expect from the Academy for Character and Excellence:

- a. We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- b. We will work closely with parents/carers where pupil's absence is cause for concern.
- c. We will support pupils to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- d. We will support pupils returning to school after prolonged absence.

4. What the Academy for Character and Excellence expects from pupils:

- a. To attend regularly and on time.
- b. To be punctual.

5. What the Academy for Character and Excellence expects from Parents/Carers:

- a. To ensure their child attends the school on those days it is open, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- b. To ensure their child attends every day the school is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- c. To avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- d. To immediately inform the school if their child is unable to attend.
- e. To avoid making medical appointments during school time as far as possible.

6. Managing Attendance

- 6.1. Refer to Appendix B for an individual school's managing attendance procedures.
- 6.2. If an attendance award system is used within a school, an attendance reward will take exceptions for 'authorised absence' into account, which are pupils whose absence marks relate to a recognised impairment (as the Disability Discrimination Act requires us to treat those with a disability 'more favourably') or those pupils granted leave for religious observance or when you are absent for school trips or attending another educational setting.

7. Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving to school on time. If a child persistently arrives after the registers close, cases will be referred to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) for further investigation.

8. Authorised Absences

- 8.1. Absences from school will only be classified as authorised for the following reasons:
- a. Genuine illness
 - b. Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
 - c. Days of religious observance
 - d. Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement or marriage of an immediate family member
 - e. Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
 - f. External examinations
 - g. When Traveller children go on the road with their parents
 - h. Attending other educational settings

9. Absences during Term Time

- 9.1. Permission must be sought in advance to take a pupil out of school during term time, which can only be requested from a parent/carer with parental responsibility and with whom the child normally lives.
- 9.2. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child's attendance being satisfactory up to the date covered by this request. If the school withdraws the authorisation due to the attendance dropping to an unacceptable level, the parent/carer will be informed of this in writing.
- 9.3. If a request is refused and the child is taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may then be liable to a penalty notice, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

10. Truancy

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be contacted by the school's Pastoral Care team, who works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer if their child has been identified as truanting from the school. Persistent cases may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

11. When Attendance Causes Concern

- 11.1. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.
- 11.2. The school will utilise the support of the Education Welfare Service (EWS), where attendance is a concern. The EWS service can support and advise parent/carers who may be experiencing difficulties with their child's attendance.
- 11.3. If attendance continues to be unacceptable, the school, with support from the Educational Welfare Service, will instigate the fast track to prosecution process as per the flow chart in Appendix C
- 11.4. For continued unacceptable attendance the local authority may make the decision to issue a Penalty Notice, requiring a parent/carer to pay a fine of up to £120 per parent/carer. In certain circumstances, a parent/carer may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where they could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2,500. The parent/carer will be given every opportunity to improve their child's attendance and they will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

Appendix B – School Attendance Management Procedures



Redhills Primary School Attendance Management Procedures

- a. The School day begins at 8.40am when the classroom doors open, registration is between 8.40-8.50am. Children arriving after 8.50am must sign in at the school office and will receive a late mark (L) on the register. Children arriving from 9am (after the register has closed) will receive a U mark 'unauthorised' this means they lose their mark for the whole sessions which will affect their overall attendance.
- b. If your child is ill, or absent from school for any reason, it is expected that parents/carers will ring in to the school office in the morning before 9.00am to inform the school of the reason for absence. If your child is unwell, please give details of the illness.
- c. The school has an answerphone and it is acceptable for a parent to leave a message. If no message has been received, the office staff will contact the parent
- d. Routine appointments i.e. dental check- ups, eye tests should be made out of school hours or during school holidays. For any appointments during the school day, please bring in your child's appointment card/letter; the office staff will take a copy and this is added to your child's school record.
- e. If the absence is for more than one day the school should be kept informed on a daily basis. If a pupil is absent due to illness for more than three days, the parent will be asked to provide an appointment card/prescription indicating that the pupil has been seen by a medical professional.

The reason for this is that when a pupil is quite unwell for sustained periods of time, we, as a school, are obliged to demonstrate that we have followed the absence process.

This is not about the school doubting what a parent has said, it ensures that when the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school to monitor pupil attendance below 95%, we can speak on behalf of the parent and explain the circumstances surrounding a pupil's low/erratic attendance or prolonged absences.

- f. Parents will be contacted on the first day of absence whenever any pupil is absent without reason, or persistently late, and will be reminded, if necessary, of their legal responsibility for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.
- g. The Pastoral Leads for each school has responsibility for following up any concerns for attendance, informing parents where there are concerns regarding attendance, and for reporting persistent problems to the designated senior leader.
- h. Warning letters will be sent home where a child's attendance drops below an acceptable standard and if not addressed this will lead to fast track prosecution.

Appendix C – Prosecution Process

Letter 1 and attendance leaflet sent to parents at 93% – 94%



Letter 2 medical warning and offer of early help sent to parents at 91-92% and meeting with class teacher.



Letter 3 Medical Evidence letter sent to parents 'O' code to be applied if medical evidence is not supplied by parents.



Attendance meeting with parent/Education Welfare Office and Key Stage Lead. Acton plan completed at meeting consisting of supportive interventions, with targets set for a 4 week period. Follow up letter to parent, confirming outcome and possible consequences.



Yes – Celebrate and reward, confirmation letter sent, close case. *(This letter can go out at any time during the process if attendance approves).*



No – if mitigating circumstances, extend for a further 4 week period and issue update letter to parents.



No – if no mitigating circumstances or attendance hasn't improved after the extended 4 week period, Education Welfare Service to initiate legal proceedings, which will either be a penalty notice or the subject of court proceedings.