University of Chichester Academy Trust

Highbury Primary School

Attendance Policy for Academies
1 December 2023 – 1 December 2024

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1. Aims

The University of Chichester Academy Trust is committed to inspiring all young people with an excellent education that raises their aspirations and enriches their lives. To do this we must all work together to strive towards every child attending as much of their education as possible so they can meet their true potential. This endeavour will be a partnership between the Trust, our Academies, Local Authorities, parents, carers and pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- It also refers to:
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees and its Local Governing Bodies

The Board of Trustees and its Local Governing Bodies are responsible for

Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's and its academies' policies and ethos

Making sure leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy

Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

Facilitating the sharing of good practice across academies

Holding leaders to account for the implementation of this policy through the Standards and Curriculum Committee of the Board and its Local Governing Bodies.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the Trust and governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Apply for fixed-penalty notices to be issued, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers and the relevant Local Authority
- Work actively with local partners to deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jo Watson (Headteacher) and can be contacted via the school office : admin@highbury-prim.portsmouth.sch.uk - 023 92 375404.

3.4 Staff responsible for attendance in Trust academies

The Trust has a number of different role-profiles covering responsibility for attendance. Leaders will ensure that the following responsbilities are allocated to the relevant staff and reflected in their job descriptions:

- Take calls/messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the relevant system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with external partners to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office using the agreed procedure at the beginning of every morning and afternoon session.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day as expected, on time
- Call the academy or use any online systems to report their child's absence before 0845 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and that where this is not possible, their child attends before and after the appointment
- Inform leaders of any factors that may be affecting their child's attendance
- Discuss any planned absences in advance of making any arrangements
- Supply medical or other evidence when requested to account for their child's absence
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance (see 5.1)
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Take an active role in working with the academy staff to improve attendance where concerns are raised
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered by partners, including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school 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.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive by 0845 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09:15 The register for the afternoon session will be taken at13:00 and will be kept open until 13:30

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible.

Notification procedure for our school are;

- Report your child's unplanned absence on Studybugs
- Notification via the school office

All parents and carers have access to the free Studybugs app, or can register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell the school whenever your child's ill and unable to attend school. Get the app or register now (https://studybugs.com/about/parents)

At Highbury Primary School, designated staff support pupils and parents on attendance. Our attendance assistant can be contacted on a day to day basis and our pastoral leader can be contacted for more detailed support on attendance.

Attendance Assistant: Mrs Pitts

Pastoral leader: Mrs Hartt

Contact details: admin@highbury-prim.portsmouth.sch.uk

: 023 92 375404

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

Notification procedure for our school are;

- Report your child's planned absence on Studybugs
- Contact the school via phone on 02392 375404

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Parents will be nootified of their child's lateness. If a child is regularly late for school, teachers and attendance team will inform the Headteacher. The school will monitor lateness and will contact parents to meetings planned to support the arrival at school on time.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the academy will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may consider this a safeguarding concern and use the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Our pastoral team may complete a home visit if necessary

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving other partners in the case.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Attendance is reported annually to parents through the written end of year report. If there is cause for concern parents will be invited in for a meeting to discuss support and guidance with regards to regular attendance.

In the Trust we define attendance using the following scale:

- High ≥ 98%
- Good ≥ 95%, but < 98%
- Low ≥ 90%, but < 95%
- Persistently absent ≥ 50%, but < 90%
- Severely absent < 50%

This can also be expressed in terms of days missed:

- 95% attendance = 10 school days missed
- 90% attendance = 19 school days missed
- 85% attendance = 29 school days missed
- 80% attendance = 38 school days missed
- 75% attendance = 47 school days missed

As a Trust we use a range of approaches to improve attendance of pupils who miss more than 1 in 10 of their lessons, including:

- Regular home visits
- Relational attendance meetings
- Referral to Early Help
- Drawing up an Attendance Plan with families
- Providing support from dedicated support workers

We respond to thresholds of absence as follows:

Threshold	Response
95% - 90%	Monitor attendance more closely
90% - 85%	Persistent Absence Review conducted every half term Medical1 and Medical 2 letters to be sent for illness related absence

	Discuss with LA Attendance Officer
85% - 80%	Personal Attendance Plan and/or family support to be considered
Below 80%	FSP or multi-agnecy plan to be put in place and include attendance as part of plan
Below 50%	Child will be added to vulnerable tracking list for conversation with link co-ordinator Multi-agency assessment and family plan to be put in place Attendance plan to be reviewed at least fortnightly Consider safeguarding risks and refere to thresholds document Formal action must be take, this is likely to be a school attendance panel

As a Trust, we consider attendance at school to be a parents' responsibility and we do not routinely reward attendance, as it is rarely within a pupil's control. Good attendance will be celebrated with children and parents.

Where attendance falls below 95% we will arrange an Irregular Attendance meeting, in order to support the parent/carer to ensure the child's attendance improves. This is a relational meeting to support the parents in finding a way forward.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an event which cannot take place at any other time and is in the child's best interest to attend. Such absences are likely to be extremely rare, unavoidable and of the shortest possible duration. A family holiday is highly unlikely to fall within this definition.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be discussed with the academy as soon as it is anticipated, before any arrangements are made and theLeave of Absence Form from School (LOAFS) submitted, where possible, at least 5 days before the absence, accessible viadownloading from the school website or requested from the school office at adm The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Any other absence which meets our definition of 'exceptional circumstances' above

- Any arrangements agreed with the academy for flexi-schooling, study leave or similar.

  Precise arrangements for part time timetables agreed between the academy, parents and the Local Authority appropriate.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The academy will ask the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice to parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days following the Local Authority's Code of Conduct. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, who process the payment. This money does not come to the Trust or the academy.

The Trust expects Headteachers to apply to their local authority, where appropriate, to issue a fixed penalty notice where a child has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more (five days) over a term.

The decision on whether or not to request a penalty notice may take into account:

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Other powers available for local authorities and academies can include

- A Parenting Order which can mean parents or carers must attend a parenting class, counselling or guidance sessionsand undertake any other actions directed by the court
- An Education Supervision Order which means a council will appoint a supervisor to help a parent or carer get their child into education
- Taking forward a prosecution as a last resourt where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate

6. Attendance monitoring

The Trust expects all its academies to use a management information system which provides information on absence and attendance patterns for individuals, groups and whole cohorts. This information is used to report to the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies with an analysis of any trends, concerns or evidence of successful approaches to improving attendance.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

Academy leaders will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance

data to the national average, and share this with the Local Governing Body. The Trust will aggregate this data and report it to the Trust Board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

Academy leaders will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. This will take into account any temporary part time timetables agreed with parents in order to meet their child's needs.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Aggregate academy-level data across the Trust to identify any common concerns or outstanding practice.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports toclass teacher and other academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Use appropriate strategies set out in paragraph 4.6 of this policy.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by The Director of Standards and Effectiveness. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees through its Curriculum and Standards Committee.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school 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 school
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
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
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	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
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 school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
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	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Last Review	**2.11.23**
Department/Owner	**Trust Board** **Local Governing Body**
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