Attendance Policy

Policy Title:	Attendance Policy	Owner:	Tim Lucas
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Contents

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good 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 parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Our Academy will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home – school links and communication systems that can be used whenever there is a concern about attendance so that these can be effectively identified and addressed.

We will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students and strive to achieve our Academy target of 96%.

Legislation & Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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

This policy links to the following Academy policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Academy will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
- Expect all Form Tutors to accurately complete am registration.
- Expect all teachers to complete class registers accurately for each lesson and pm registration.
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence and follow up any unexplained absences.
- Display attendance rates around the Academy and reward good and improved attendance of all students.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to students returning after absence.
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Trust Manager for Pupil Attendance and Welfare (TMPAW) in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Regularly evaluate attendance procedures.
- Include attendance information and related issues in termly house newsletters to student's parents/carers.
- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a student is absent, she/he will be missed and to recognise the needs of the individual student when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence.
- Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibility to ensure their son/daughter leaves for school on time and provide explanation for absences. They will be discouraged from taking holidays in term time.
- Issue Penalty Notices to parents who refuse to support improvement in their child's attendance in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.

Procedures for communicating absence

Unplanned Absence:

- All parents/carers must notify the Academy Attendance Officer (or reception) by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- If no contact is made from the parent / carer on the morning of the student's first day of absence, the following procedure will be implemented, if the parent makes contact or the school get in contact with the parent the process stops and normal attendance procedures resume:
    Day 1 - The Attendance Officer will send a message (via text or email) to the parent / carer
    Day 2 – The Attendance Officer will send a message (via text or email) and call the parent or carer
    Day 3 - The Attendance Officer will record the 'Day 3' absence on CPOMS and pass to the HoY to call and send a letter to the parent or carer
    Day 4 - The Attendance Officer will record the 'Day 4' absence on CPOMS and pass to the HoY or SHoY to call and send a letter to the parent or carer

    Day 5 - Attendance officer logs on CPOMS and informs DSL in person that the student has not attended school, Safeguarding arrange for a home visit that day.

- Absence due to illness will be coded as authorised **if** the Academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.
- Parents receive letters when attendance falls below 94%.
- Parents are invited to parent panels to discuss concerns re attendance.
- Fixed Penalty Warning Notices will be sent after 8 sessions of unauthorised absence.
- Fines are notified by issuing a penalty notice when a student reaches six unauthorised absences in a six week monitoring period after receiving a penalty notice warning letter.
- Once a penalty notice has been issued these are then overseen by the local authority for payment of escalation of court proceeding for non-payment.
- Should unauthorised absence continue after a penalty notice has been issued then all evidence of intervention will be supplied to the local authority to commence legal proceedings. This is in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.

Section 7 of The Education Act, 1996 states that you have a legal duty to ensure your child's regular and punctual attendance at school. 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 under s.444 Education Act 1996.

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. This information must be sent to the Attendance Officer prior to the appointment.

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 Appendix 1 to find out which term-time absences the Academy can authorise.

Persistent Absence

If a student's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving The Shared Learning Trust Manager for Pupil Attendance and Welfare.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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 school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Registration and Punctuality

Marking of Registers:

- Staff have a legal obligation to complete the register accurately.
- This will be completed on Arbor.
- All notes from students must be passed on quickly to the Attendance Officer.
- Tutors should check that notes have the name of student, tutor group and dates of absence.
- **Tutors should follow up on all absences, requesting notes in planners by calling or emailing parents.**

Teachers need to allow enough time to complete their registers electronically in their lesson. **Tutors need to complete am registration before 8:50 am and classroom teachers must complete pm registration before 1:30 pm.**

It is a **teacher's** responsibility to give details to the ICT technical staff of any technical problems that prevent them from completing electronic registration.

Morning Registration (Form time)

Students, who arrive at their Form group after 8:40am, should be given a late mark (L) – this counts as a "present" but shows that the student did not arrive on time. Students who arrive at the Academy after 8.40am will be sent to the assembly hall where they will be informed of their detention.

Any student not arriving by 9.20am will be marked absent ("U") and will sign in at Student reception.

If a reasonable excuse is not provided in writing, a late detention will be given, which will be served at after school the following day.

Students who do not attend this detention, will be issued a 75 minute detention the following day.

Afternoon Registration (12:30-1:30pm year group dependant)

Afternoon registration occurs during mid day form time and is led by the form tutor. Due to our split lunch years 7, 9 and 11 have form time from 1:00 to 1:30 and years 8 and 10 have their form time from 12:30 to 1:00.

Arrival at Lessons

If students arrive after the late bell and do not have an excuse they should be marked as late and a detention will be issued for the following day. Regular lateness is monitored by the pastoral team, students who are repeatedly late will receive support however, they may also receive a more serious sanction than a detention.

Lesson registration - Post Registration Truancy

- Class Teachers should register students in all lessons using Arbor
- Each student must be coded either present (/), late (L) or absent (N).
- Class teachers must use the 'emergency' alert button on arbor for any student who is not present in their lesson but was marked present in their previous lesson or at Tutor time.
- Patrol staff will check if the student has signed out and if not, they will work with the relevant attendance lead to begin a search of the Academy for the missing students
- If the student is not located in the Academy then the Head of Year, Senior Head of Year or Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Tutors

Tutors are the people who know the students best. They have the most contact with them and are usually aware of the outside influences. Their intervention is imperative if we are to improve attendance.

Tutors must:

- Give attendance/punctuality a high profile.
- Take the required actions as directed by the year group attendance lead
- Use attendance data in Tutor time to highlight improved and continued positive attendance.
- Monitor attendance and absence of all members of the Tutor group
- Identify any patterns of absence within their Tutor group and provide the appropriate support and guidance.
- Ensure HOY is aware of any attendance issues within their Tutor group

- Pass notes from parents/carers to the Attendance office to ensure that they are coded appropriately.
- Ask students for "authorisation" notes and, if not received then call home.
- Any notes from phone calls home or absence notes should be passed to the Attendance Office promptly.
- If any information raises concern of a safeguarding nature then this information will be passed to the safeguarding team immediately.

Year Team Attendance Leads

Year Team Attendance Leads must:

- Monitor the work of their form tutors in fulfilling the above role.
- Give attendance / punctuality a high profile and include it as a standing item on the agenda of year team meetings
- Ensure the attendance action tracker is used within Tutor time.
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Officer to analyse the year groups attendance and agree actions.
- Work closely with the attendance officer and Vice Principal to analyse, target and improve the attendance of their year group.
- Discouraging term time *leave* and obtaining work for those students where it is unavoidable.
- Implement plans to achieve improved attendance through targeted intervention.

- Implement the school system of rewards and sanctions (see the Behaviour for Learning Policy).
- Direct, support and monitor the work of form tutors. Ensure completion of electronic registration. Agree plans of action about individual students.
- Meet with parents/carers and the Attendance Officer to discuss concerns about attendance of identified students.
- Work with the Vice Principal and the Pastoral Team to create individual packages and integration plans.
- Raise serious concerns with the Trust Manager for Pupil Attendance and Welfare.
- Where attendance and absence issues raise safeguarding concerns then this information will be shared with the safeguarding team immediately.
- Conduct home visits as necessary.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer must:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile.
- Ensure weekly meetings with all HOY are conducted.
- Post out letters of concern.
- Work with students and families where Tutor intervention has not had the desired impact.

- With the Head of Year, make referrals to the TMPAW where planned intervention has had no impact on attendance.
- Send out absence messages via arbor or text or email
- Make first day contact with parents/carers of students who are not in school and where the reason for absence is not known between 9:30 – 11:30am.
- Register students who are late. Setting consequences for lateness.
- Ensure all registers are taken correctly.
- Meet with the Vice Principal and TMPAW on a regular basis.
- Complete register totals on a weekly basis.
- Complete annual school returns to the Government.
- Meet with and calling parents for pre-referral meetings.
- Conference students with poor attendance.
- Produce reports on attendance. These include, but are not limited to:
    - Letters to students requesting notes
    - Daily and weekly lateness
- Analysing attendance figures to provide useful information on attendance of individuals, groups and the whole Academy.
- Carrying out post registration truancy checks.
- Completing CME (Children Missing Education) Proformas within 5 days of being made aware when a student has left and referring to the TMPAW.
- Removing students from roll after CME procedures completed and having a reference from the Local Authority.
- Conduct home visits as necessary.

The Shared Learning Trust Manager for Pupil Attendance and Welfare

The TMPAW will:

- Discuss potential referrals with the SLT Lead for Pupil Attendance and Welfare who will suggest the most appropriate course of action.
- Ensure pre-referral letter is sent by the Academy.
- Attend pre-referral meetings and admission meetings (as and when required).
- Attend CP conferences, Child in Need, Core Group, strategy, planning meetings and MM meetings as necessary.
- Inform parents that their child is involved with the TMPAW.
- Issue Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letters to all who meet the criteria under the Local Authority code of conduct.
- Create and maintain interventions for persistent absentees.
- Meet with Head of Year and Attendance Officer on a three weekly basis for Register Inspections
- Meet with the SLT Attendance Lead on a regular basis (two weekly).
- Meet with the DSL Officer where concerns arise and complete referrals as appropriate
- Feed into EHA and Pre EHA

- Complete Penalty Notice process alongside SLT lead for unauthorised absences or casework; whichever is appropriate, ensuring compliance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.
- Create and maintain all paperwork relating to the issuing of Penalty Notices.
- Track all Penalty Notices that have been issued.
- Ensure all Penalty Notices are sent to Local Authority.
- Complete all paperwork and associated evidence for unpaid Penalty Notices as required by the LA
- Oversee commencement of legal proceedings through the academy issuing of penalty notices or initiate prosecution action where the criteria of the Local Authority Code of Conduct has been met. Completing relevant legal paperwork.
- Liaise with the Local Authority EWS where legal proceedings have commenced under statutory duty.
- CME visits, casework and ad hoc home visits
- Completing CME Proformas and forward to Luton Borough Council CME coordinator.
- Advise school as to best practice and new regulations regarding attendance and child protection.
- Supporting families who have made the decision to home educate their child/ren. Ensuing that all information is shared with the local authority elective home education team.
- Complete Monthly and Annual reports
- Provide attendance analysis reports where appropriate
- Complete the Irregular Attender Returns Form for each pupil who meets the Local Authority criteria and forward to the Local Authority EWS on a half termly basis as per the EWS code of conduct.

Class Teachers

Class Teachers must:

- Take a register for every lesson.
- Inform patrol immediately if a student marked present in their previous lesson or at registration is missing from their lesson.
- Follow up suspicious absences.

- Act on lateness, through appropriate conversations and letters.
- Inform admin team of any changes required to class lists.
- When requested, provide work promptly for absent students.

Curriculum Leaders

Curriculum Leaders must:

- Ensure that class lists are updated following any changes.
- Ensure that teaching staff are taking class registers in every lesson.
- Provide work for students that are to be educated offsite.

SLT Lead for Attendance

The SLT Lead for Attendance will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile.
- Meet with the Attendance Officer and TMPAW (2 weekly) on a regular basis.
- Support and monitor work of the Attendance Officer and HOY (re attendance and punctuality).
- Ensure that individual students, form groups and year groups are aware of their attendance.
- Hold staff to account regarding their statutory obligations.
- Liaise with/work alongside the TMPAW in producing an annual attendance action plan.
- Is the Delegated Authority for the academy for the process of issuing Penalty Notices in conjunction with TMPAW.
- Agree Penalty Notice process alongside TMPAW in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct to parents who refuse to improve their children's attendance.
- Line manage Attendance Officer.
- Ensure CME referrals are made promptly, Removing students from role within 5 days of notification.

Reintegration of Long Term Absentees

Where a student has been absent for an extended period, and if parents/carers and the child desire it, a phased return may be organised by the Head of Year in conjunction with the SLT Attendance lead and TMPAW and other agencies where appropriate. The precise nature of this depends on individual circumstances but may, for example, include the student spending some time in the inclusion area, attending mornings only, carrying an attendance report. Close monitoring should be undertaken by the Head of Year to ensure the effectiveness of chosen strategies.

Term Time Leave

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force on 1st September 2013. The amendments remove references to 'holiday' and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term-

time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is the Principal who will determine the number of school days a student can be away from school should the leave be granted. Requests for leave of absence should not normally be granted for the purposes of a 'holiday'. The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on 'holiday' during term time. The Principal has the discretion to authorise leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance by the parents/carers that the pupil normally resides with and will need to meet the strict criteria (refer to the relevant proforma/request form). Unauthorised term-time leave may result in a penalty notice being issued for each parent per pupil.

Students whose parents/carers wish to take term-time leave should complete a request form. This is returned to the Attendance Officer who will process the request. Before a response is given the request should be passed to the SLT Lead for Attendance for approval, then to the Attendance Officer and TMPAW for monitoring and issuing of Penalty Notices.

Looked After Children

All Looked after Children will have the designated teacher for LAC to support them, with their Head of Year as their key worker.

Where attendance issues arise with Looked after Children the Attendance Officer or TMPAW will liaise with the designated teacher for LAC to decide together how to proceed. No legal interventions can take place for LAC children as per LBC code of conduct and government guidelines.

Religious Observance

The Academy will follow the guidelines set by the government and the Luton Education Welfare Service with regard to matters relating to religious observance and attendance.

The Education Regulations (2006) state that: "schools must authorise absence that is due to religious observance but the day must be:

- Exclusively set apart for religious observance
- Set apart by the parents/carers' religious body (not the parents/carers themselves)

If the religious body sets apart a single day for religious observance and the parents ask for four days leave of absence, the school is only required to allow two days per annum (one day per festival). The remainder is discretionary leave. All requests for discretionary leave must be made in advance."

Considering the above information, the following will apply:

- In the all cases, eg Eid, (unless advised otherwise by the EWS) one day will be authorised and coded 'R'.
- Any additional days will have to be requested in advance, and a reason for the request provided.
- The Academy will then decide whether the request is reasonable and should be granted.
- Any further days that a student takes which have not been authorised by the Academy will be marked as unauthorised absences.
- The Academy will not generally authorise additional days retrospectively.

Circumstances where the Academy will not authorise additional days include:

- To go shopping prior to the religious observance day.

- To prepare food etc. for the day.
- To 'recover' after festivities.
- To pick up/drop off relatives at the airport.

As with all authorised absence, the Academy will, wherever possible, look at the individual circumstances and may consider the student's attendance record when deciding whether to authorise additional days.

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