

Ormiston Academies Trust

## George Salter Academy

### Attendance policy

(incl. Children with health needs who cannot attend school, CME and EHE)

#### Policy version control

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## Contents

1. Policy statement and principles.....	4
2. Why Regular Attendance is important.....	4
2.1. Safeguarding.....	4
2.2. Vulnerable children .....	5
2.3. Learning .....	5
3. Context.....	5
3.1. The Law Relating to attendance and safeguarding .....	5
3.2. Compulsory School Age:.....	5
Safeguarding .....	6
3.3. Covid 19.....	7
4. Roles and responsibilities .....	8
4.1. People with responsibility for attendance .....	8
4.2. Promoting Regular Attendance .....	8
4.3. Admission and attendance register .....	9
4.4. Family Contact Details .....	10
5. The academy day .....	10
5.2. Lateness .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.3. How we manage lateness .....	10
6. Types of Absence .....	10
6.2. Authorised Absences .....	10
6.3. Unauthorised Absences .....	11
6.4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA) .....	11
7. Absence Procedures.....	12
7.2. Safeguarding.....	12
7.3. Leave in Term Time .....	13
7.4. Appointments .....	14
7.5. Religious or cultural observance .....	14
8. Children Missing Education (CME) .....	15
8.11. Safeguarding.....	16
8.12. Missing children/runaways: .....	16
8.13. Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System: .....	16
8.14. Children of migrant families/unaccompanied minors:.....	16
8.15. Children of service personnel:.....	17
8.16. Children of gypsy, Roma and traveller (GRT) families: .....	17
8.17. Fixed Term and Permanent Exclusions .....	17

9. Elective Home Education (EHE) .....	18
9.7. Decision to home educate.....	18
10. Children with health needs who cannot attend school .....	19
11. Alternative Provision .....	20
11.10. Part-time timetables.....	21
12. Support and Intervention .....	21
12.7. School Targets and Initiatives .....	22
13. Rewards .....	23
14. Attendance Codes .....	23
Appendix 1.....	24
EXEMPLAR First absence warning letter template.....	24
Appendix 2.....	25
EXEMPLAR Low attendance concerns letter template.....	25
Appendix 3.....	26
EXEMPLAR Unauthorised absence letter template .....	26
Appendix 4.....	28
EXEMPLAR Student Attendance Review Meeting template.....	28
Appendix 5.....	28
Learning from Serious Case Reviews	

## 1. Policy statement and principles

- 1.1. All academy staff are committed to working with parents and children as the best way to ensure high levels of attendance are achieved and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.
- 1.2. At George Salter Academy we aim for an environment which enables and encourages children to enjoy and excel in their education
- 1.3. Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning and children should be at the academy, on time, every day it is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- 1.4. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and has safeguarding implications.
- 1.5. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary age groups
- 1.6. The academy will work with the community and partner agencies to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
  - Ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
  - Act early to address patterns of absence.

## 2. Why Regular Attendance is important

### 2.1. Safeguarding

- 2.1.1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and is the number one priority for Ormiston Academies Trust.
- 2.1.2. Difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying a child and they and/or their family are in need of early help and support.
- 2.1.3. Lack of, or erratic attendance, persistent absence or children missing education are safeguarding issues and must act as a warning sign to a range of concerns including neglect, sexual abuse, child sexual or child criminal exploitation. They may also be an indication of peer -on -peer abuse including bullying and sexual harassment or significant mental ill health concerns. They must not be seen as purely isolated attendance concerns.
- 2.1.4. Where children have or have had a social worker or are in need of safeguarding support, this will inform decisions about attendance issues.
- 2.1.5. Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

2.1.6. More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 2.2. Vulnerable children

2.2.1. It is also important for parents/carers/social workers to let the academy know of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances. If you are uncertain about what would be considered a vulnerability, please contact the Assistant Principal – Inclusion at the Academy.

## 2.3. Learning

2.3.1. We know from experience and from studies that regular absence and poor punctuality can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning. When a child is absent or arrives late it disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning not only of that child but also that of others in the same class.

2.3.2. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at the academy is a parent/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from the academy without a good reason constitutes an offence in law and may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

# 3. Context

## 3.1. The Law Relating to attendance and safeguarding

3.1.1. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

*“the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have*

*either at school or otherwise”*

## 3.2. Compulsory School Age:

3.2.1. A child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first.

3.2.2. A child can leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. (see attendance coding guide in 'School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities')

3.2.3. They must then do one of the following until they're 18:

- stay in full-time education, for example at a college
- start an apprenticeship or traineeship
- spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

## Safeguarding

3.2.4. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

### *Other relevant guidance/advice*

- Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2021- statutory guidance for schools [Keeping children safe in education 2021 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98722/Keeping-children-safe-in-education-2021.pdf)
- Working together to safeguard children – statutory guidance for safeguarding partners [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/71122/Working-Together-to-Safeguard-Children-2018.pdf)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/2484/contents/made)
- School attendance main guidance Aug 2020 [School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/88722/School-attendance-guidance.pdf)
- School attendance Covid addendum – ongoing updating by DfE check website for latest version [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98722/Addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-COVID-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year-GOV.UK.pdf)
- Looked After Children [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98722/Promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children-and-previously-looked-after-children.pdf)
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs  
Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2013 [Additional health needs guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/71122/Additional-health-needs-guidance.pdf)
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities Sept 2016 [Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/71122/Stat-guidance-template.pdf)
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children [Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils: supporting access to education - Case study - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98722/Gypsy-Roma-and-Traveller-pupils-supporting-access-to-education-Case-study-GOV.UK.pdf)
- General information and advice for academies can also be found in the Government's publication [Missing Children and Adults - A cross government strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98722/Missing-Children-and-Adults-A-cross-government-strategy.pdf)

- Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation [Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- NSPCC [Protecting children from sexual exploitation | NSPCC Learning](#)
- Elective home education guidance for local authorities April 2019 [Elective home education: departmental guidance for local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Elective home education – a guide for parents April 2019 [Elective home education: guide for parents \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- Alternative Provision Statutory guidance for local authorities Jan 2013 [Alternative Provision statutory guidance for local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

#### *Related academy policies*

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Admissions
- Exclusion
- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour for learning
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

### 3.3. Covid 19

3.3.1. Government advice is constantly being updated. The academy will follow all local and national government advice and guidance and adapt procedures as required.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1. People with responsibility for attendance

Role	Name	Contact details
Principal	Mr Adrian Price	a.price@georgesalter.com
Academy Attendance Lead	Mr Michael Cadwallader	m.cadwallader@georgesalter.com
Academy Attendance Officer	Mrs Amarjit Parmar	a.parmar@georgesalter.com
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr John Paul Mcinerney	j.mcinerney@georgesalter.com
Academy SENCo	Mrs Cara Bradley	c.bradley@georgesalter.com
Academy LAC Coordinator	Mrs Refina Ferreira	r.ferreira@georgesalter.com
Local authority named officer for the education of children with additional health needs		
Local authority named officer for SEND	Ms Michelle Hill	Michelle_hill@sandwell.gov.uk
Local authority named officer for elective home education	Ms Suzanne Stars	Suzanne_stars@sandwell.gov.uk
Other LA contacts	Ms Varinder Sidhu (Outreach)	Varinder_sidhu@sandwell.gov.uk
	Mrs Louise Morris (Manager CME)	Louise_morris@sandwell.gov.uk

### 4.2. Promoting Regular Attendance

4.2.1. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers/social workers, children and all members of academy staff.

4.2.2. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide a good quality education appropriate to their child's needs via a published timetable which necessitates regular and punctual attendance.
- Accurately complete attendance registers at the beginning of each session using SIMS ATTENDANCE.



- Record late arrival accurately on SIMS and ensure that the school's sanctions policy is followed with regard to the allocation of negative points and detentions (where appropriate).
- Make every reasonable effort to contact the parent when their child fails to attend school without good reason.
- Deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent.
- Make every effort to encourage excellent attendance, punctuality and behaviour.
- Provide parents / carers with details on attendance in the academy newsletter and on the website
- Report to parents on how their child is performing what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and rewards breakfasts.
- Provide parents / carers with support to achieve and maintain outstanding support for their child.

### 4.3. Admission and attendance register

4.3.1. The academy will keep an admission register and attendance register. The contents of which includes:

- All children on roll at the academy
- All children's personal details including full legal name
- At least two, and preferably three, telephone numbers for different trusted adults
- The date of admission (or re-admission)
- Information regarding parents and carers
- Details of the school last attended.

4.3.2. The academy will enter children on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the academy that the child will start, or the day that the academy has been notified that the child will attend the academy.

4.3.3. The academy will take and submit the attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. This will be done within the first 10 minutes.

4.3.4. On each occasion, we will record children's attendance using the national codes. (For details of current national attendance codes see School attendance guidance [School attendance guidance \[publishing.service.gov.uk\]\(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/362222/School\_attendance\_guidance.pdf\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/362222/School_attendance_guidance.pdf))

4.3.5. Children will be marked absent if they were not in the academy during the period when the register is open.

## 4.4. Family Contact Details

4.4.1. In order to allow us to safeguard children it is important that parents and carers provide the academy with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers of trusted adults in case of emergency.

## 5. The academy day

5.1.1. Registers are marked by 8.50am but your child will receive a 'late' mark if they are not in their tutor room by that 8.40am.

5.1.2. At 9.20am the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after that time, they will receive an unauthorised absence mark that shows them to be on site but not counted as a present for statistical / legal purposes.

5.1.3. Children arriving late to the academy should report to the attendance officer in main reception where their attendance will be recorded.

5.1.4. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information / instructions and news for the day. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons. It can also be embarrassing for the child; this can encourage absence.

## 5.2. How we manage lateness

5.2.1. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Student Welfare Manager to discuss and seek a resolution to the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## 6. Types of Absence

6.1. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the academy (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

### 6.2. Authorised Absences

6.2.1. An authorised absence is where the academy has either given permission in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered is accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

6.2.2. Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical or dental appointments for which the academy has granted leave (appointments should be made outside the academy day where possible)

- Unavoidable cause (which is expected to be an emergency and unavoidable)
- Days of religious or cultural observance for which the academy has granted leave
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment which has been agreed with the academy
- Other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the principal i.e. funerals, weddings (see section 7.3 below for further information).

### 6.3. Unauthorised Absences

6.3.1. An unauthorised absence is where either no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is not considered acceptable by the academy

6.3.2. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children from attending the academy unnecessarily or without reason
- Parents / carers keeping children off school to assist with translation
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a late mark i.e. after registers have closed (see section 5 above for times)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Leaving the academy without permission during the school day (truancy)

6.3.3. If an absence is recorded as unauthorised and absence is causing a concern the academy may refer this to the Local Authority's Education Service at any point. (Processes for CME are listed in section 8 below)

6.3.4. The Local Authority can use various sanctions to promote regular attendance such as issuing a Penalty Notice Fine or initiate court proceedings.

6.3.5. Whilst any child may be absent sometimes, it can be that they are reluctant to attend or there are safeguarding concerns

6.3.6. Any problems with regular absence are best sorted out between the academy and the parents/carers and the child.

### 6.4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

6.4.1. A child is considered to be a 'persistent absentee' (PA) if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for **whatever reason**.

6.4.2. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

6.4.3. PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through weekly analysis of attendance data by the attendance officer, the Student Welfare Manager (SWM) and the Assistant Principal responsible for attendance. The Assistant Principal inclusion and SEND team analyse specifically for trends amongst SEND students and we also combine this analysis with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

- All our PA children and their parents/carers will be supported through an action plan. The plan may include:
  - Allocation of additional support through a mentor,
  - Individual incentive programmes
  - Participation in group activities around raising attendance.
  - Student Attendance review meetings

6.4.4. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the LA, Senior Leaders, Student Welfare Managers, Progress Leaders and SEND team at the Academy.

6.4.5. If your child has, or is at risk of, reaching the threshold for PA, you will be asked to provide evidence for any future absence. This may be medical evidence for illness which can be in the form of prescriptions, medicine packaging or hospital letters.

## 7. Absence Procedures

7.1. If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as early as possible and at the latest by 08.00am on the first day of absence and give an expected return date.
- You can contact us via the Attendance Officer or your child's Student Welfare Manager.
- Call every day thereafter to advise school of your child's progress.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
  - or, you can call into the academy and report to reception, who may arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

### 7.2. Safeguarding

7.2.1. To ensure that a child is safe and well, and to understand the reason for absence so that it can be recorded with the correct code on the register, any unexplained absences will be followed up immediately.

7.2.2. The senior leader with responsibility for attendance, liaising with the DSL, will ensure that children who are vulnerable are prioritised for contact. A written risk assessment will be put in place to determine the type and frequency of safe and well checks that

are needed and actions to be taken including referrals to Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) and the police if required.

7.2.3. Therefore, if your child is absent we will:

- Telephone, text or email you by **10.30am** on the first day if we have not heard from you with a reason for your child's absence. We may need to speak to your child to ascertain that they are safe and well.
- Follow up with a text message to any parents/carers whom the academy are unable to contact via telephone by **11am**
- Visit the home on the same day whenever it is deemed appropriate if there is continued lack of contact, to carry out a safe and well check on the child
- Visit the home on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence whenever it is deemed appropriate to carry out a safe and well check. Further absence will result in further home visits for safe and well checks.

7.2.4 We may contact the police and/ or local authority staff to assist with safe and well checks, particularly if there are additional safeguarding or welfare concerns.

#### *Following up*

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders/ Assistant Principal if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Student Welfare Manager if attendance moves below 93% and to the Attendance Officer if the attendance moves below 90%. Should the attendance continue to decline then the senior leaders with responsibility for attendance and inclusion will have the matter referred to them.

### 7.3. Leave in Term Time

7.3.1. There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from the academy in term time.

7.3.2. Taking leave in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time.

7.3.3. We require parents to observe the term times of the academy. All applications for a leave of absence must be made in advance to the principal and will only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances.

7.3.4. If the academy grants a leave request, we will determine the length of time that the child can be away from the academy. We do not have the discretion to authorise holidays during term time.

- 7.3.5. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.
- 7.3.6. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice. (academy to add details of fines if appropriate)
- 7.3.7. Each request for absence under an exceptional circumstance category will be considered individually.
- 7.3.8. When making the decision the following factors may be considered:
- The amount of time requested
  - The age of the child
  - The child's general absence/attendance record
  - Proximity to internal or external test/examinations
  - Length of the proposed leave
  - Child's capacity to catch up any work missed
  - Child's educational needs
  - General welfare of the child
  - Circumstances of the request
  - Purpose of the leave
  - Frequency of the activity, and
  - When the request was made.
  - When leave of absence has been granted, the absence will be recorded as authorised, using the appropriate register symbol.

## 7.4. Appointments

- 7.4.1. As far as possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of the academy day. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the academy prior to the appointment.
- 7.4.2. Children must attend the academy before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the child to leave during the day, they must follow the academy's signing out procedure.
- 7.4.3. Should a child arrive late to the academy, following an appointment, they should report to the attendance office where a member of the attendance team will provide them with a slip. The student should then give this to their class teacher to confirm that they have been registered in school.

## 7.5. Religious or cultural observance

- 7.5.1. Parents must inform the academy in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. The academy will authorise absences where a reasonable

request is made. Parents should inform the academy PRIOR to any absence due to religious observance.

## 8. Children Missing Education (CME)

- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities Sept 2016 [Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

8.1. The Local Authority (LA) officers with responsibility for CME are Louise Morris, Louise\_Morris@sandwell.gov.uk

- 8.2. For the purpose of this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere.
- 8.3. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g., age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 8.4. Children who go missing from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- 8.5. Children who are already known to children's social care, who are on a child in need or child protection plan or in the care of the local authority are additionally vulnerable and in need of robust protection.
- 8.6. Where a child has not returned to the academy for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from the academy without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days the child can be removed from the admission register, **but only** if the academy and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. Records of all checks must be kept on the child's file. Taking a child off roll must be seen as a last resort.
- 8.7. This only applies if the academy does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the child is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable causes
- 8.8. Before removing a child from the register the academy will make reasonable enquiries, with the local authority, to ascertain the whereabouts of the child, being compliant with GDPR, which could include:
- Making contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours, using known contact details.
  - Checking with agencies known to be involved with family
  - Checking with the local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known
  - Checking with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved

- Checking with the local authority where the child lives, if different from the academy's location
- Making home visit(s), and if appropriate, make enquiries with neighbours and relatives

8.9. All home visits will be risk assessed before being carried out

8.10. The academy will treat each case on its individual merits and use their judgement, ensuring they have taken into account all of the facts.

### 8.11. Safeguarding

8.11.1. For children at risk of harm or neglect:

8.11.2. The DSL will ensure the academy response to identifying children missing from education supports identifying potential abuse or exploitation and also prevents them going missing in the future

8.11.3. The academy will follow local child protection procedures.

8.11.4. However, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made immediately to children's social care Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the police as per the academy's safeguarding procedures.

### 8.12. Missing children/runaways:

8.12.1. The local authority lead person responsible for children missing from home or care is Louise Morris, Manager Children Missing in Education

8.12.2. Should the academy suspect a child has gone missing/run away, the DSL will ensure the academy's child protection procedures are followed and the police and MASH are contacted.

### 8.13. Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System:

8.13.1. LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18).

8.13.2. Where a child is registered at the academy prior to custody, the academy will keep the place open for their return.

### 8.14. Children of migrant families/unaccompanied minors:

8.14.1. There is an increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may not yet have settled into a fixed address or may have arrived in to an LA area without the authority becoming aware.

8.14.2. If the academy becomes aware of such families, they will notify the LA immediately



## 8.15. Children of service personnel:

- 8.15.1. If the academy is concerned about the continuity of education for a child leaving the academy, the attendance officer will contact the Ministry of Defence: Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) for advice
- 8.15.2. The most effective way to contact the CEAS team is via email: [DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk) CEAS helpline: 01980 618244 or 94344 8244

## 8.16. Children of gypsy, Roma and traveller (GRT) families:

- 8.16.1. When a GRT child leaves the academy without naming their next destination school, the academy attendance officer will contact the Local Authority. If necessary, the academy will consult the Local Authority for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the child's education

## 8.17. Fixed Term and Permanent Exclusions

- 8.17.1. All incidents where a child is sent home due to poor behaviour, will be coded on the register as an exclusion, even if pre-agreed with a parent, i.e., children being sent home during lunch times. If an exclusion is for part of the day (including lunch-time), it will be noted as a half day exclusion. (see academy exclusion policy for details)

### *Safeguarding*

- 8.17.2. Whilst a child is excluded from school, parents have a duty to ensure that their child is safe and well and appropriately supervised at home.
- 8.17.3. A child must not be present in a public place during academy hours throughout the exclusion period, unless there is reasonable justification for this. Parents may be liable to prosecution and/or receive a penalty notice from the local authority if their child is present in a public place during academy hours during the dates of the exclusion. It will be for the parent to show reasonable justification.
- 8.17.4. The principal will take account of the legal duty of care when sending a child home following an exclusion.
- 8.17.5. The academy will continue to ensure regular safe and well checks are completed. This is particularly important for additionally vulnerable children
- 8.17.6. Following a permanent exclusion, safe and well checks will be carried out until the result of any appeal is known.

## 9. Elective Home Education (EHE)

- 9.1. Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to the academy full-time.
- 9.2. Whilst many home-educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience this is not the case for all and can mean some children are less visible to services that are there to keep them safe and supported.
- 9.3. DfE guidance for local authorities sets out the role and responsibilities of LAs [Elective home education: departmental guidance for local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431222/elective_home_education_departmental_guidance_for_local_authorities.pdf) whilst this guidance is primarily aimed at LAs, academies, our attendance staff and those maintaining the academy registers, will make themselves familiar with it. The academy will also follow the local authority policy and protocols

[https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/635/elective\\_home\\_education\\_policy\\_-\\_december\\_2020.pdf](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/635/elective_home_education_policy_-_december_2020.pdf)

- 9.4. The decision by parents as to how to educate their child, whether at a school or at home, should be an informed, active and positive one. It is important that parents obtain sufficient information when making that decision.
- 9.5. We advise any parent who wishes to educate their child at home to discuss their decision with the academy first. Please contact the Attendance Officer.
- 9.6. We will ensure we:
  - Respond positively and constructively;
  - Take all necessary steps to resolve any issues in school that may be influencing parents' consideration of EHE;
  - Signpost the parent/carer to the local EHE Team, or the School Admissions team, who will provide further advice and guidance to help the parent to make an informed choice.

### 9.7. Decision to home educate

- 9.7.1. Parents must inform the academy in writing that they intend to educate their child at home.
- 9.7.2. Once the letter of notification, written by the parent/carer, to home educate has been received, the academy will immediately notify the local authority elective home education officer (EHEO). – name and contact details of local authority EHEO here and the child's name will be removed from the academy register on receipt of the letter
- 9.7.3. The child's place at the academy will remain 'open' for 10 ten working days whilst the EHEO verifies with parents that they have made an informed choice about educating their child at home

- 9.7.4. The parent and child will be offered the opportunity to discuss their decision with the principal
- 9.7.5. We will never seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance record. In the case of exclusion, we will follow the relevant legislation and have regard to the statutory guidance.
- 9.7.6. If a child has a poor attendance record, the academy and, if appropriate, local authority will seek to address the issues behind the absenteeism and use the other remedies available to them.

### *Safeguarding*

- 9.8. The academy will complete a risk assessment for any vulnerable children for whom a parent elects to educate at home and will work closely with safeguarding partners if they feel that a child's welfare or safety is compromised.

## 10. Children with health needs who cannot attend school

- 10.1. Children with health needs are vulnerable.
- 10.2. The academy will contact their Local Authority named officer for the education of children with additional health needs when it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative due to health needs.
- 10.3. To support children with health needs who cannot attend, the academy will:
- Liaise with appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the child
  - Have a designated member of staff who will be responsible for the child and act as the main point of contact
  - Liaise with the LA to monitor that the child receives full time education which is of good quality, (as defined in the statutory guidance Alternative Provision (2013)<sup>1</sup> which allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible (*full time is not defined in law but should equate to what the child would normally have in school- unless it would not be in the child's best interests, e.g. in KS4 this would be 25hrs a week*)

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<sup>1</sup> DfE Statutory Guidance: Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs January 2013 [Additional health needs guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264262/Additional_health_needs_guidance_publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Liaise with any alternative provision to ensure the child is safeguarded and carry out due diligence checks
  - Ensure the child has a comprehensive health care (or similar) plan which addresses medical, educational social, emotional and mental health needs, has been contributed to by the child and parents/carers
  - Record discussions, decisions taken and rationale
- 10.4. Children with vulnerabilities including children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and children who have or have had a social worker
- 10.5. The academy will ensure that children with additional vulnerabilities are accurately identified and have a named lead professional responsible for coordinating their holistic needs. This will include monitoring their attendance

## 11. Alternative Provision

- 11.1. All professionals have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The tracking and reporting of attendance at alternative provision is an essential component in achieving this. Children at alternative provision are additionally vulnerable and will be closely monitored.
- 11.2. The senior leader with responsibility for alternative provision is the Vice Principal, Personal Development.
- 11.3. The arrangements for monitoring of attendance, contacting of parents and carrying out safe and well checks will form part of a written individual plan, agreed with the child, parents and alternative provider before the child begins their placement.
- 11.4. Attendance at off-site alternative provision will be monitored daily by the Attendance Officer / Student Welfare Manager who will ensure that swift action is taken when a child does not attend their alternative provision place.
- 11.5. The academy will make regular visits to the alternative provision to meet the child, their link tutor and to check on their well-being and academic progress
- 11.6. Alternative providers are required to contact the academy on the first day by 9.30am whenever the child is absent.
- 11.7. The senior leader with responsibility for alternative provision will ensure arrangements are in place to formally monitor, report on attendance at alternative provision to SLT on a weekly basis, liaising with the DSL, SENCo LAC coordinator or other key colleagues as necessary
- 11.8. Children whose attendance falls below the academy's target will have a plan put in place to support better attendance

11.9. There is an expectation that any safeguarding concerns are raised with the designated safeguarding lead and that all alternative providers adhere to the child protection and safeguarding policies held by the academy

### 11.10. Part-time timetables

11.11. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Academies have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all children

11.12. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a child's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a child from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

11.13. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any individual support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the child is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

11.14. There will be an identified lead person with responsibility for monitoring the part-time timetable

11.15. Therefore, part-time timetables will last no longer than 6 weeks and formal written reviews will take place at least fortnightly and will include the child, parents/carers and other professionals as appropriate.

11.16. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, an academy has agreed to a child being absent from the academy for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

### *Safeguarding*

11.17. The academy will ensure that the DSL has been consulted, a risk assessment carried out and suitably robust arrangements are in place to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of any child on a part-time timetable.

## 12. Support and Intervention

12.1. The academy recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year. We recognise that certain groups of children may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.

12.2. When a child is absent for the first time the academy may consider sending out information (exemplar in appendix 1) outlining the support that is available to parents to ensure good attendance.

- 12.3. If a child's absence then drops below 93% a concerns letter (exemplar in appendix 2) will be sent inviting the parent/carer in for a meeting.
- 12.4. If no improvement is seen, parents will receive an unauthorised absence letter (exemplar in appendix 3) informing them of the decision to mark any further absences as unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.
- 12.5. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance Officer / Student Welfare Manager. It may become necessary for the Assistant Principal (Attendance) to become involved in a supportive capacity to promote improved attendance.

If a student's absence becomes of significant concern the local authority Attendance Officer (AO) will be informed. Once referred to the AO, the AO will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the AO has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

## 12.6. School Targets and Initiatives

- 12.7. The school has targets to improve attendance and everyone has an important part to play in meeting these targets. Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and on the academy website.
- 12.8. We have set a whole school attendance target of 98% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Details of our absence levels are available from Mrs Amarjit Parmar (Attendance Officer)
- 12.9. Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling
- 12.10. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Principals Newsletter
- 12.11. Academy leaders, governors and OAT regional directors and safeguarding manager ensure that attendance data, particularly for identified vulnerable groups is closely and regularly monitored identifying trends or patterns and assessing the impact of actions taken.

## 13. Rewards

13.1. The academy acknowledges 100% attendance in the following ways:

- Termly Certificates
- Weekly Reward Points issued by Form Tutors
- Opportunity to attend end of term / year rewards trips
- End of term prize draws

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Certificates
- Praise – assembly / weekly e-briefing

## 14. Attendance Codes

The academy will use the attendance codes as published by the Department for Education [School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance-guidance) and will ensure any subsequent guidance is followed

# Appendix 1

## EXEMPLAR First absence warning letter template

Date

Name and address

PUPIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

**As an Academy we strive to improve overall attendance rates and reduce the numbers of persistent absent students. A student is classed as persistently absent if their attendance dips below 90% for the current academic year and any student falling into this category is at risk of prosecution from the Local Authority whilst their education is also at high risk of being negatively impacted.**

Whilst your child's attendance currently stands at \_\_\_\_\_% we thought it appropriate to contact you to confirm that we are currently monitoring their attendance to ensure that they do not become at risk of being recognised as persistently absent. This monitoring process will be in the form of regular conversations with your child by their Form Tutor.

We trust that you will be supportive of our approach to ensure your child's regular school attendance and help them to reach their full academic potential.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me at the Academy on 0121 553 4665

Yours sincerely

**Form Tutor**



## Appendix 2

### EXEMPLAR Low attendance concerns letter template

Date

Name and address

PUPIL:

Dear .....,

As you are aware we have recently been in touch regarding the risk of your child slipping into the category of 'Persistently Absent' (attendance below 90%).

Unfortunately, despite bringing this to your attention, your child's attendance has still not improved, with their current attendance being at \_\_\_\_\_% and as a result I would like to invite you into the Academy for a meeting with \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ in which we will be able to discuss the issues surrounding attendance and the next steps moving forwards.

We trust that you will be supportive of our approach to ensure your child's regular school attendance and help them to reach their full academic potential.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me at school on 0121 553 4665

Yours sincerely

**Student Welfare Manager**

## Appendix 3

### EXEMPLAR Unauthorised absence letter template

Date

Name and address

PUPIL:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

As you are aware we have recently been in touch regarding the risk of your child slipping into the category of 'Persistently Absent' (attendance below 90%) and as a result they were closely monitored by their Student Welfare Manager.

Unfortunately, despite this intervention, your child's attendance has still not improved, with their current attendance being at \_\_\_\_\_% and as a result I would like to invite you into the Academy for a meeting with \_\_\_\_\_ (SWM) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Attendance Officer) on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ in which we will be able to discuss the issues surrounding attendance further and the next steps moving forwards.

We trust that you will be supportive of our approach to ensure your child's regular school attendance and help them to reach their full academic potential.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me at school on 0121 553 4665

Yours sincerely

**Attendance Officer**

## Appendix 4

### Exemplar School Attendance Review Meeting Letter template

Date

Dear

PUPIL & FORM:

Concerns have been brought to my attention regarding ..... attendance. I would therefore request that you attend a School Attendance Meeting on DATE & TIME.....

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss how we can work together to improve attendance. STUDENT NAME is expected to attend part of this meeting with you and will be requested to join us from HIS/HER lesson.

Where attendance falls below 96%, or a student has a high number of broken weeks, this becomes a concern.

There is also defined link between attendance levels and achievement.

We want to ensure that every student has the opportunity to meet their potential. It is therefore crucial that students attend school every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours unless specialist hospital appointments have to be kept, or there is a medical/dental emergency.

95% = 10 days of the school year = 40 lessons missed

94% = 12 days of the school year = 48 lessons missed

93% = 14 days of the school year = 56 lessons missed

90% = 20 days of the school year = 80 lessons missed

We would kindly request that you confirm you are able to attend this meeting. If this is not possible the meeting will continue in your absence with your child.

Yours sincerely

**Attendance Officer**

## Appendix 5

### Learning from serious case reviews

[CHSCB-Local-Review-Chadrack-Report-FINAL.pdf \(chscp.org.uk\)](#)

[2019NottinghamshireChildKN15Overview.pdf \(nspcc.org.uk\)](#)