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Policy for

**Attendance**

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Prepared by:	Adopted by Board of Directors	Signed	Renewal Date (3 year cycle)
		----- Chair of Board of Directors	

## Attendance

### **Attendance Policy Statement:**

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of the academy and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is also important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The academy aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The academy will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the academy. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

### **Aims:**

- To improve the quality of academy life
- To create a culture in which good attendance is normality
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and staff that the academy values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

### **Objectives:**

- To involve the children or young people in their academy attendance
- To communicate regularly with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular academy attendance
- All academy staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people's attendance
- To recognise the important role of class teachers and learning mentors in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and organisation within the academy to enable the AIMS and OBJECTIVES to be met
- Effective working relationship with Education Welfare Service.

### **Targets:**

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To maximise the percentage of children achieving attendance of 96% or above
- To reduce absence percentage each year
- To continuously improve academy attendance by agreeing new targets
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by academy managers and staff in conjunction with the EWO
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole academy where appropriate in a context of all known relevant factors.
- To target resources and implement where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the academy is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Cared for Children.

### **Informing Stakeholders**

#### **Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised of our policy on attendance:**

- When their children first start at our academy
- Home academy contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parent(s)/carer(s) evenings
- On the academy website
- In the academy prospectus

#### **The Children:**

#### **Children will be advised of our policy on attendance:**

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum.

#### **Procedure:**

- Children are expected to attend academy for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
  - - Authorised (where the academy approves pupil absence)
  - - Unauthorised (where the academy will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s)/carer(s) or carers will provide an explanation by 9.30 a.m. if their child is absent, on the first day the

absence occurs. This can be by telephone or personally at the office or by appointment

- If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s) or carers, then the academy will contact the home by telephone on the initial day, following this with a letter after 3 days of unexplained absence. **This contact is recorded in the attendance log and the register.**
- The academy will keep in regular contact with parents/carers during an absence until their child's return to academy. This helps us to work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure a positive return to academy can be made at the earliest opportunity.
- The Principal will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Class teachers will regularly remind their class of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Each teacher will find relevant ways to promote good attendance in their class.

### **Identification & Referral**

- Identification of poor attendance or punctuality is made by the class teacher, learning mentor or the Academy Business Manager.
- Concerns are passed to the Principal, who is the person responsible for contacting parent(s)/carer(s).
- Person responsible will contact parent(s)/carer(s) with letter 1.
- Following the letter, there will be four weeks monitoring of the young person's attendance.
- If there is no improvement, at this point, attendance letter 2 will be sent and parent(s)/carer(s) may be invited in for a meeting with the academy's Principal and learning mentor. At this meeting an action plan will be drawn up with a target for attendance. Attendance panels will go ahead with or without the attendance of parent(s)/carer(s).
- After four weeks monitoring, the academy will inform parent(s)/carer(s) of a further meeting with the academy's Principal and learning mentor or referral to the Education Welfare Service.
- The academy will reinforce parental duty to ensure full academy attendance
  - If attendance has improved over the four weeks, the academy will continue to monitor attendance. Letters to recognise the improvement will be sent to parents/carers.
  - If attendance continues to be poor the academy will refer to Education Welfare Service and a final warning letter will be sent to parent(s)/carer(s).
- The referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s) and a print out of the child or young person's attendance certificate.

## **Completing the Register**

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils is perceived as an opportunity for the academy to receive young people formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session.
- The marking of electronic registers will be given high importance at all times within each classroom.
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at academy.
- The register should be marked using the symbols advised by DfE and Cheshire East Council. The agreed symbols can be found on SIMS Assessment module.
- The Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **Lateness**

Academy begins at 8.55a.m and all pupils are expected to be in academy for registration at this time. Registers close at 9.10a.m. Up until this time pupils are given a late code. Arrivals after close of register at 9.10a.m. are given an unauthorised code.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken.

## **Absence due to illness**

Parents and carers are expected to provide a full explanation for any absence due to illness or a medical condition. Evidence should be presented to the academy such as a doctor's appointment card or a copy of prescription details. If no evidence is provided it will be the Principal's decision whether to authorise the absence. Parents and carers will be informed if the academy decides not to authorise the absence. Any child who accumulates 20 absences attributed to medical appointments or illness in an academic year will be required to provide evidence of illness as detailed above for any further absences. Parents and carers will be invited to a meeting with the Principal to discuss how the academy can help to improve attendance levels. Failure to produce medical evidence to support an absence will mean the absence will be automatically be unauthorised.

## **Pupils returned to academy by Truancy Patrols**

The academy will have in place a procedure for pupils who are returned to academy by a Truancy Patrol.

## **Authorised Term-time Leave of Absence**

The academy fully implements amendments The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013 dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. The Principal will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parent(s)/carer(s) will be advised not to book holidays during term time. Leave of absence in term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Principal will determine the number of academy days a child can be away from academy if leave is granted due to exceptional circumstances. A child who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date, can legally be removed from the academy roll and may be liable to prosecution.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave of absence, the Academy will consider each case individually taking into account the reason for leave of absence, the production of requested evidence, a child's overall attendance record, stage of education and previous authorised requests. The academy will not authorise leave of absence during any examination or assessment periods.

### **Procedure**

- A request must be made at least four weeks prior to the first day of absence being requested. Some exceptional circumstances may not allow for this and this will be taken into consideration.
- Requests must be made on the leave of absence form available from the academy office
- Parents/carers are required to attend a meeting with the Principal to explain their exceptional circumstances and present evidence of the circumstances.
- If the circumstances are considered to be exceptional the Principal may apply the points of the leave of absence matrix for the academy to determine the acceptable length of time for such an absence.
- Parents/carers will be notified of the academy's decision on the returning copy of the request form. An accompanying letter from the Principal detailing the reasons for the decision will also be sent.
- The academy will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice for any leave of absence taken without authorisation from the academy.
- If a fixed penalty notice is issued this is the timeline for the penalties.

<b>Penalties for unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One child</b>	<b>Two children</b>
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240

before 28		per parent
After 28 days	You will be summons to appear before the magistratesq Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child\$ regular attendance.	You will be summons to appear before the magistratesq Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children\$ regular attendance.

**What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?**

- Let the academy know as soon as possible why your child is away
- Send a note when your child returns to academy
- Try to make appointments outside academy time
- Do not allow your child to have time off academy unless it is really necessary

**If you are worried about your child’s attendance at academy what can you do?**

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple
- Talk to the Principal and staff at the academy
- Talk to the Academy Nurse
- Talk to the Education Welfare Service

You may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with you and the academy to resolve the situation.

**The academy aims to have ALL children attending regularly and punctually and parent(s)/carer(s) need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.**

**Parent(s)/carer(s) need to be aware that Cheshire East Academy’s are operating the Fast Track Prosecution System in co-operation with the Education Welfare Service.**

**Parent(s)/carer(s) need to be aware that Cheshire East Council in conjunction with NAME Academy are operating Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) for each parent who fails to ensure their children’s regular attendance at academy.**

Parents should be aware that a fixed penalty notice for non attendance will incur a fine of £60 per child per adult if paid within 21 days; or £120 if paid within 28 days. This means if two children from a family with two parents take an unauthorised absence and a fixed penalty notice is issued the fine will be:

2 (number of children) x 2 (number of parents) x £60 = £240 (if paid within 21 days)

In developing this Attendance Policy we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire East is an ethnically diverse community. The academy has incorporated practice, which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority in the Education Development Plan. This aims to improve the attainment of minority pupils across the Authority. The academy is aware and takes into account the need for all public authorities to re-examine and make changes to their practice in promoting genuine multi-racial partnership.

The academy understands the need for on-going communication with parent(s)/carer(s)/carers and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the academy.

**Local variance:**

- Classes with the best attendance each week will be recognised and rewarded in the academy's Celebration Assembly.
- Children with 100% attendance will be rewarded by the academy. Good attendance awards will be presented at the end of each term and the academy year.

