



**Aston Lodge  
Primary School**

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## **ASTON LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Attendance and Punctuality**

**Policy**

**Written by Sarah Cronin**

**Date written: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

**Date to be reviewed: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2021**



WICKERSLEY  
PARTNERSHIP  
TRUST.

## **Introduction**

This policy has been developed in conjunction with DfE and Local Authority Guidance and adopted by the Wickersley Partnership Trust.

Reference to Parent/Carer throughout this document also includes any person who has parental responsibility or who cares for children.

The Academies will work effectively to improve attendance working with various partners, parent/carers and pupils. Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the Academy and encouraging pupils to achieve good attendance levels.

An understanding that non-school attendance is a safe guarding issue. Only when a pupil is in school can a true responsibility be taken for safe guarding all the interests of the pupil.

There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement. The Academies are committed to maximising the achievement of all pupils. This policy intends to boost attainment and achievement levels by increasing and maintaining high levels of attendance.

Regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit full from academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the Academy. A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at school.

The Academies will take appropriate action to promote good attendance.

### **Aims and Principles of Good Attendance**

- The Multi Academy Trust is committed to maximising the achievement and attainment of all pupils.
- There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the Academies.
- Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the Academies and encouraging pupils to reach good attendance levels.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at the Academies.
- The Academies will take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance.
- National target for attendance is 96%. The Academies individual targets are in Appendix A.

### **Statement of Expectations**

#### **What the Academies expect of the pupils:**

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- To report to reception/attendance office when late.

### **What the Academies expect of the parents/carers:**

- To fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend the Academies regularly and on time.
- To ensure that they contact the Academies on the first day their child is unable to attend giving a valid reason for absence and also each day the child is absent from school.
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the Academy day.
- To contact the Academies in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from the Academies.
- Work in partnership with the Academies and other agencies as and when appropriate to resolve issues relating to non-attendance/punctuality.
- To inform the Academies of any forthcoming appointments, giving copies of letters and appointment cards to the Academies and where possible, arrange appointments outside of the Academy day.
  - Where appointments are booked for after registration time pupils must attend the Academies first.
  - The pupil needs to return to school as soon as possible after the appointment, where this is possible

If a pupil leaves the school premises for any reason during the Academy day, staff will ensure that this is recorded, to comply with Health & Safety Regulations.

### **What Parents and pupils can expect of the Academies:**

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at the Academies.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance with a rewards system in place.
- Efficient and accurate recordings of attendances and punctuality with strategies to improve.
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend the Academies and also subsequent days.
- Any barriers to attendance, dealt with efficiently.
- To respond promptly to any issue that may lead to none or irregular attendance with support from the attendance team.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the individual parent/carer. This will be reflected in the ways in which attendance issues are addressed. For example, the Academies should recognise that some parent/carers have difficulty understanding written communications, (the academies will also recognise the reluctance of some parent/carers to come into the Academies).
- Be alert to critical times for example, return to the Academies after a period of long-term sickness or traumatic event.
- A whole Trust attendance policy which is consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parent/carers.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance. Information is on display in the Academies.
- Close liaison with the Education Welfare Service Team to assist and support families where needed.
- Notification to parents/carers of attendance through letters home and meetings in the Academies.

- When a pupil's attendance falls below 96% in a half term, parents will be sent a letter advising that their child's attendance is of concern and support will be offered to improve attendance.

It will also state that failure to attend the Academies regularly and on time could result in prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act. If there is no improvement parents/carers will be required to meet with the Academies' Attendance Panel.

#### **What the Trust and Academies within it can expect of the Education Welfare Service:**

- The Education Welfare service has a key function in working closely with the Academies and families in order to promote excellent levels attendance and punctuality at school, there by contributing to raising pupil attainment.
- To support the Academies to fulfil their legal responsibilities with regard to pupil attendance.
- To take register inspections on visits, and discuss matters with Learning Mentor/Attendance Officer.

#### **Leave of Absence Requests**

##### **Section 7 of the Education Act states that:**

"Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential in order for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Rotherham Education Welfare Service will continue to investigate cases of regular absence from school and, following appropriate casework intervention, will instigate legal action if applicable".

In line with amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 with effect from 01 September 2013, the following will now apply:

- No requests for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time can be authorised, except in exceptional circumstances in which the Head of School has to establish how many days a child may be absent.

The definition of exceptional circumstances is:

- Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specific time in the year. **This must be evidenced with written proof from the employer at the time of application.**
- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a child or parent's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. **Evidence must be produced from a doctor or professional body.**

If a parent/carer takes their child out of the Academies during term time, without authorisation, the Head of School will have to make a request to the Local Authority to issue a **Fixed Penalty Notice**.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, the penalty is £60 per child per parent/carer when the payment is made within 21 days. After that time, it will increase to £120. Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that the parent/carer

has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at the Academies. Please note that a separate Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child and all monies are payable to the Local Authority.

Should a request for Leave of Absence need to be made, a Leave of Absence form must be completed and brought in for the Head of School's attention, including any evidence as stated above.

### **Understanding Different Types of Absence**

Only the Academies can authorise absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required to ensure a pupil's attendance is correctly categorised.

**Authorised Absences** = Mornings or afternoons away from the Academies for an acceptable reason, for example, illness and/or medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in the Academy day, emergencies or other unavoidable reasons and compassionate leave at the Head of School's discretion.

**Unauthorised Absences** = Absences which the Academies do not consider to be reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. These include:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absence that has never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive in the Academies too late to receive their mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday in term time that have not been agreed with the Head of School

Whilst most pupils will be away from the Academies because of illness, some individuals can be reluctant to attend. Any such problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the Academies and the family.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend the Academies, then we encourage the family to work with all involved to understand the root problem. When necessary we engage the support of other agencies such as the School Nurse and Education Welfare Service.

- Each day counts for 2 (am/pm) marks of attendance or absence.

### **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

#### **Registration procedure**

- Foundation Stage 1 sessions are 9.00am until 12.00am morning only.
- Foundation Stage 2 registration begins at 9.00am each morning and at 1.00.

- Key Stage 1 registration begins at 9.00am each morning and at 1.00.
- Key Stage 2 registration begins at 8.50am each morning and at 1.00.
- Any child to arrive in the Academies after these times stated above, dependant on which Key Stage, will have to report to the Academies offices to receive their mark.
- Class teachers should insert a mark for every pupil whether it is a present mark or an absent mark. All marks must be made accurately in black or red ink.
- The register will close at the start of the session and any child not present at that point will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Unless a medical appointment has been attended and evidence provided, where a medical mark will be made.
- The register will be brought to the Academies offices immediately after morning and afternoon registration.

### **Responding to lateness**

- Pupils arriving after morning or afternoon registration will report to the Academies offices, where the late book will be filled in with the time and reason for the lateness.
- When lateness becomes a concern letter 1 of the punctuality section will be sent, if there are no improvements in lateness a second letter will be sent. Parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with the Head of School and Attendance Officer. If there are no improvements then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer.
- From time to time the Education Welfare Officer will do a 'Late Gate'.

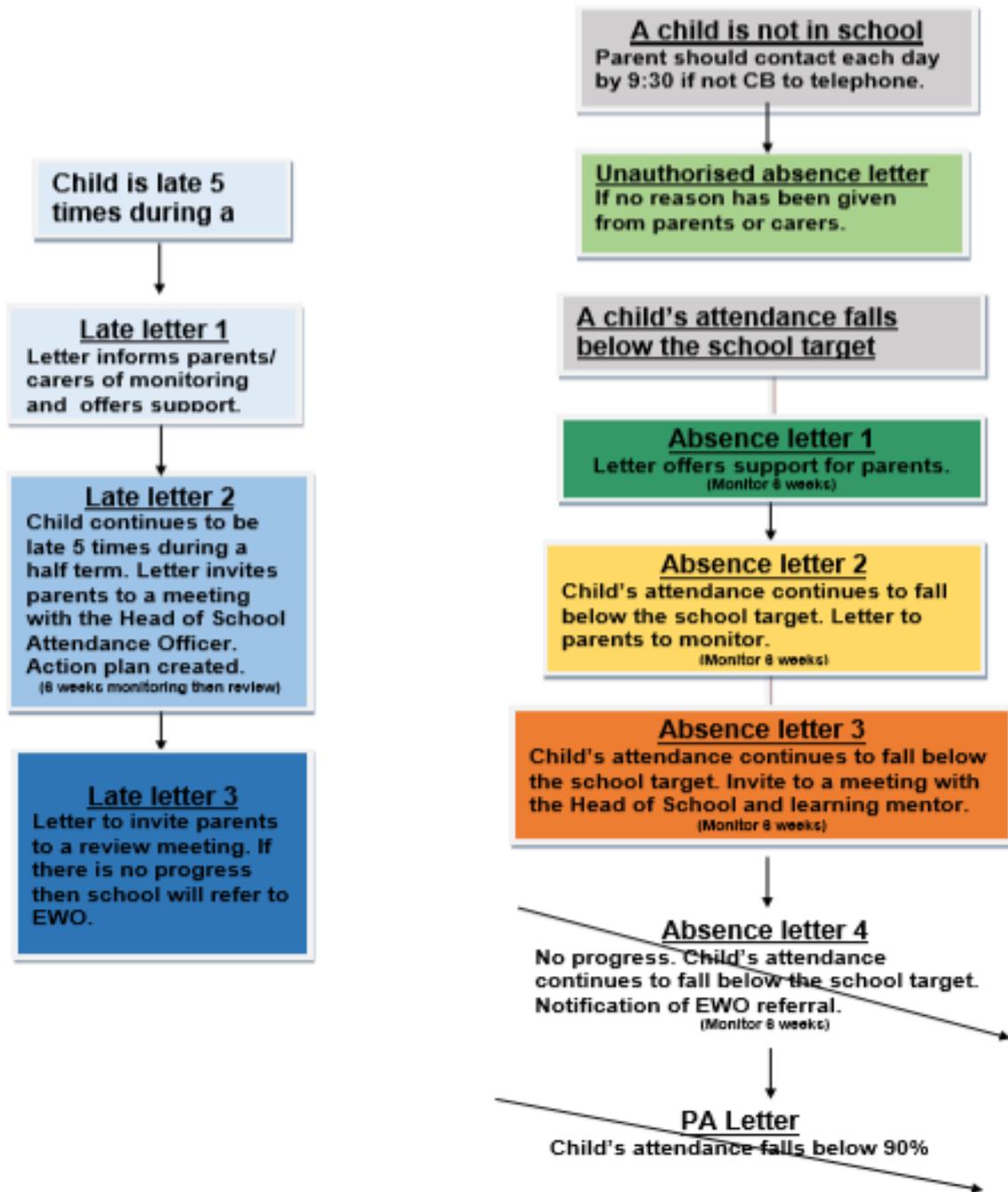
### **Response to attendance Issues**

- This policy and procedures document to improve attendance will be reviewed each Spring Term.
- The Academies will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. This being 96% or less.
- Returns on persistent absences will be made to the Local Authority each half term.
- Appropriate strategies will be employed in order to address the attendance of individual pupils.
- After long periods of absence, reintegration procedures will be followed.
- Attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored. The Trust will respond to any areas of concern identified.

### **Safeguarding**

- Academy attendance is a safeguarding issue – see the individual Academies Safeguarding policy. It is therefore vital that ALL registers must be marked correctly and up to date.

## Appendix A – Academy Attendance Process



The Policy Updates and Implementation are the responsibility of the following people:

Aston Lodge Primary Academy: Headteacher Mrs Cronin, Attendance Officer Miss Burton