



# Attendance Policy

**Primary and Secondary Academies**

October 2020

## Introduction

North Star Community Trust believes that regular attendance is very clearly linked to pupils making good progress in their learning. It ensures that pupils settle into the Academy of their choice and experience the stability and security they need in order to achieve their best. We aim to ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and each school acts early to address patterns of absence.

Regular and punctual attendance is expected of pupils attending our Academies.

Each academy will strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment, where each member of the academy community feels wanted and secure. Academy staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents / carers in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend regularly and on time.

There are established and effective systems of incentives and rewards, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and time keeping. These include effective and efficient systems of communication with pupils, parents / carers and appropriate agencies which provides mutual information, advice and support. These systems include data analysis (which are regularly monitored through Governor and Trustee meetings) and will also challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents / carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

## Aims of the attendance policy

- Aim 1** to improve the overall percentage of pupil attendance at our academies
- Aim 2** to make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the academies including pupils, parents / carers, teachers and governors
- Aim 3** to develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Aim 4** to provide support, advice and guidance to parents / carers and pupils
- Aim 5** to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Aim 6** to further develop positive and consistent communication between home and the pupil's academy
- Aim 7** to implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- Aim 8** to promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies
- Aim 9** to recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence due to sickness

## Promoting good attendance

The Academies use a positive approach towards encouraging consistent attendance in the following ways: -

- The use of incentives and rewards to recognise pupils who attend regularly and come to the Academy on time as well as those who make significant improvement in attendance and time keeping
- Weekly and termly assemblies which recognise and promote excellent attendance
- Opportunities for parents / carers to discuss any difficulties with attendance and / or punctuality with the Education Welfare Officer and / or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

## Punctuality

All the Academies recognise that good punctuality is essential so that children do not miss valuable lesson time at the start of the day.

**Pupils should be in their class and ready to start their day before the official start of the academy day.**

If a pupil arrives at the academy after the late bell sounds, they will be marked as *Late* (L). Pupils who arrive late should report to the main office and a designated member of staff will record the child's details and time of arrival.

Persistent lateness (i.e. regular arrival to the academy after the official start to the academy day) is monitored, and parents / carers will be informed of this in writing. Where there is no improvement to an individual pupil's punctuality, the parents / carers will be invited into the academy to discuss a plan of action.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, unless a valid reason can be supplied (for example GP / dental appointment), they will be marked in the register with an *Unauthorised Absence* (U). The opening and closing times of academy registers can be found at **APPENDIX 1**

**The following will be considered as 'present'**

- education visit or trip
- educated off site
- approved sporting activity.

Pupils who take time out to visit prospective schools / academies, colleges or Sixth Forms will be marked with an authorised absence code if evidence is provided. However, parents / carers must consider the level of disruption that repeated visits may cause to their own and other pupils learning.

## Categorising absence as authorised or unauthorised

**Please note, an academy day is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon**

As per The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, all absences are considered Unauthorised until a satisfactory reason for that absence has been given.

Only the Head teacher of the academy the pupil attends can authorise an absence.

An **authorised** absence is granted under the following circumstances: -

- exclusion
- absences during term time which have been both requested by parents using the absence request form (found at **APPENDIX 4**) and agreed by the Head teacher in writing.
- on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs
- medical / dental appointments (with proof of appointment)  
All medical / dental appointments should be arranged, where possible, outside of school hours.
- illness:
  - a) The academy should be informed by the pupil's parents / carers on the morning of the first day of absence and regularly throughout the period of illness (this does not automatically condone absence, only the Head teacher of the academy can do that).
  - b) If medical advice was sought, parents / carers should provide the academy with a medical note and supporting evidence (e.g. prescription, appointment card, medical certificate) on the pupil's return.
- prevention from attending by exceptional circumstances

## Where no reason is provided for absence

Where a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided: -

- the academy office will contact the parents / carers requesting that they provide a reason for absence (this is usually by text message but may be by phone call). This process is often known as 'First day calling'.
- if a parent / carer fails to respond or update the academy, they may be sent a *No Reason Absence* letter.
- any absences for which no reason is provided will be recorded as unauthorised.

## Children missing in education

The Department for Education (DfE) defines children missing education (CME) as "*a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more).*"

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education)

Schools have the responsibility for notifying the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service (EWS) of any pupils that are potentially CME (Children Missing Education).

Where pupils have been absent from school for 10 days (or 5 days if the pupils are subject to a Child Protection Plan or are Children in Care) and the absence has not been authorised by the school, the office staff use a range of strategies within that time to ascertain the reason for absence such as;

- telephone calls to all contact numbers on record.
- asking class teacher / other staff / other parents.
- informing the Education Welfare Officer so a welfare check can be completed (if appropriate)

In the event of no contact with the family being established by the above action and the whereabouts of the student remains unclear, the school requests additional support from the Trust's Education Welfare Officer who provides support to the schools by;

- continuing to make attempts to contact the family and emergency contacts
- contact the local authority to request a council tax / benefits check
- conduct further visits to the home address
- check with local schools for siblings
- writing to the family at their last known address
- write to forwarding address and contact the receiving borough's CME Officer / Education Welfare Service

In the event of no contact with the family being established by the above and the whereabouts of the pupil remains unclear, the Trust's Education Welfare Officer will provide a completed CME referral form, check list and evidence of correspondence to the local authority's CME officer following 20 school days' absence.

If the Trust's Education Welfare Officer is able to establish the child's new address, a referral will be completed and sent to the CME officer / Education Welfare of the receiving borough.

All schools are required to notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be added or deleted from the admission register.

Where a pupil is to be removed under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, this should be done as soon as a ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

## Parental requests for absence during term time

Any requests for absence during term time must be made by completing an '*Absence Request Form*'.

The Head teacher of the academy will give due consideration to the request with the circumstances of each case being taken into account along with the pupil's attendance record. Evidence for the absence may be requested from the parent / carer concerned before a decision can be made.

The final decision rests with the Head teacher and parents / carers will be informed of that decision in writing.

If the Head teacher agrees a term time absence, it will be recorded as *Authorised*.

If the Head teacher does not agree a term time absence, it will be recorded as *Unauthorised*.

A copy of the '*Absence Request Form*' is available from the school office and can also be found at **APPENDIX 4**

## Persistent absence

**Our academies strive for a minimum of 96% attendance.**

Appropriate staff members continually monitor attendance and where there is persistent absence, or a pattern of non-attendance: -

- the Attendance Officer will inform parents / carers in writing via a letter of concern and the pupil's attendance will then be monitored by the Education Welfare Officer and academy staff
- if there is no improvement, a second letter of concern will be sent to parents / carers and the pupils attendance will then be monitored for a period of two weeks
- if attendance does not improve then the Academy will invite parents / carers to a School Based Meeting involving the Academy's Education Welfare Officer and a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- An action plan for improved attendance will be established. If attendance does not improve, further School Based Meetings will be arranged. If the parent / carer does not attend, the Education Welfare Officer may arrange a home visit.

- **Where attendance is 90% or less** and where no acceptable reason has been given, the Education Welfare Officer will formally write to parents / carers to address this. Action plans and / or *Parent Contracts* may be put in place. The Education Welfare Officer can also request additional support for parents / carers with their consent.
- If there is still no improvement after support has been provided, a statutory referral for consideration of prosecution will be made to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service.

## Referrals to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service

The Local Authority's Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal responsibility to monitor school attendance and enforce the law when an offence has been made.

### Issuing fines / Penalty notice

In some cases of persistent absence or where a pattern of non-attendance is found, the academy will consider issuing '*Fixed Penalty Notices*' to parents and carers who are considered capable of, but unwilling to work towards improving their child's attendance as per Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

A Penalty Notice is a fine issued to parents or carers and can be either £60 (per parent / carer per child) which rises to £120 if it is not paid within 21 days. If the full fine is not paid after 28 days in total, parents / carers may be prosecuted for failing to ensure their child attends their registered school.

### Prosecution of parents

Where a referral is made, the Education Welfare Service will require parents / carers to attend a pre-court meeting to consider whether court action is required. Parents / carers are given the opportunity to show how they plan to improve attendance and if satisfied, no court action will be taken and a review will take place after a monitoring period.

If they feel attendance will not improve and all other means of support have failed, the Local Authority Education Welfare Service will prosecute and a court date will be sent to parents / carers.

The Academy will be asked provide the following evidence to the court: -

- a Registration Certificate signed by the Head teacher (The magistrates will accept this as a record of attendance from the school register)
- a record of all communications and attempts at communication with parents / carers
- a record of all meetings with parents / carers and copies of any *Parent Contracts*

Prosecution could result in a fine of up to £2,500 for each parent, a jail sentence of up to three months or a community sentence.

The Education Welfare Service will explain to parents / carers their rights to challenge any non-attendance recorded in the register.

Information with regard to the legal action used to enforce attendance can be found both at the [school attendance and absence](#) section of the Gov.uk website and at the [absence and attendance](#) section of the Local Authority website.

## Roles and responsibilities

We recognise that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Where staff have concerns about a child, these are reported immediately to a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team for their school in line with our [Safeguarding, Child Protection and associated procedures policy](#) available on policies page of the school website.

### The role of teaching staff

- teaching staff are ultimately responsible for an accurate record of attendance being taken. (On occasion, Support Staff / Teaching Assistants may be required to complete the register on behalf of teachers)
- the register must be taken at the start of each session using the appropriate codes.
- the register must be saved 10 minutes after the beginning of the morning session and again after the start of the afternoon session.
- staff must return completed absence request forms to the school office.
- every effort should be made to chase absence notes in support of the office staff who also have a duty to monitor unauthorised absences
- persistent lateness or any pattern of absence creating a concern to teaching staff should be reported to the Year Lead or Head of Year as well as the Education Welfare Officer.

### The role of the business support staff

- to monitor registers on a daily basis and ensure that every entry is preserved in line with DfE guidance
- to monitor attendance and punctuality and keep records of all action taken
- check absence notifications and amend any unauthorised absence codes as appropriate if a message has been received in the office
- if no message has been received the office will contact the parents / carers requesting that they provide a reason for absence (this is usually by text message).



A *No Reason Absence* letter may be sent home if the office receives no response from parents / carers

- to inform the Education Welfare Officer where a pupil's attendance or punctuality is giving cause for concern

## **The role of the Education Welfare Officer**

Our Trust has an Education Welfare Officer whose responsibility it is to monitor pupil attendance.

- the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work with parents and pupils to discuss absences and provide support with any difficulties which affect their attendance or punctuality.
- meetings may be arranged which parents / carers are expected to attend. Action plans and / or *Parent Contracts* may be put in place to improve attendance
- the EWO will prepare documentation required for a referral to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance remains poor.
- attendance and punctuality data will be produced for the academy's Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body

## **The role of the parent / guardian**

- by law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16 years) must receive appropriate education.
- as per Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it is the statutory duty of every parent / guardian to ensure that their child attends the academy regularly and on time.
- where their child may be absent or late, parents / carers must contact the academy and provide a reason. Preferably before the start of the school day.
- where absence is for medical reasons, parents / carers must provide the appropriate information.
- where pupil attendance is causing concern parents / carers must attend meetings arranged by the Education Welfare Officer and comply with agreed actions
- an '*Absence Request Form*' (found at **APPENDIX 4**) must be completed for any requests for absence that will occur during term time

## List of appendices




- APPENDIX 1      Opening and closing of academy registers
- APPENDIX 2      Academy register codes
- APPENDIX 3      Education Welfare Officer and Academy contact details
- APPENDIX 4      **Absence request form**

## Opening and closing of academy registers


**Pupils should be in their class and ready to start their day before the official start of the academy day.** Pupils who arrive late should report to the main office and a designated member of staff will record their details and time of arrival.

Please be advised that during the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic, schools may vary or stagger the below times to ensure the safety of pupils and staff. In the event that a school needs to make changes to its school day or week, this will be communicated to parents.

### Primary academies

ACADEMY	Academy opens at:	Official start of the Academy day / Time that the late bell will ring:	Academy register closes at:
	8.45 a.m.	8.55 a.m.	9.25.a.m.
	8.30 a.m.	8.40 a.m.	9.10 a.m.
	8.45 a.m.	8.55 a.m.	9.25.a.m.
		Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as Late (L)	Pupils arriving after this time without a valid reason may have their attendance recorded as unauthorised (U)

### Secondary academies

ACADEMY	Academy opens at:	Registration takes place at:	Academy register closes at:
	8.00 a.m.	8.40 a.m.	9.00.a.m.
		Pupils arriving after this time must sign in at the office and will be recorded as Late (L).  There is a 45 minute detention for lateness.	Pupils arriving after this time must sign in at the office and will be recorded as unauthorised (U) if no authorised reason is provided.  There is a 45 minute detention for lateness

## Academy register codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (NOT covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned or partial whole school closure	Not counted in possible attendances

If used, a brief note or explanation must be recorded alongside codes C, O and U

In addition to these, some codes may be used in alternative ways as directed by the DfE, in relation to those pupils not attending, in circumstances related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Contact details



### Education Welfare Officer

Kumba Sandi  
020 8804 4126 (Ext 647)  
07948 423 363

[ksandi@northstartrust.org.uk](mailto:ksandi@northstartrust.org.uk)

Enfield  
Heights  
ACADEMY

### Enfield Heights Academy

1-3 Pitfield Way, Enfield, Middlesex EN3 5BY  
020 8805 9811

[heights@northstartrust.org.uk](mailto:heights@northstartrust.org.uk)



### Heron Hall Academy

46 Queensway, Ponders End, London EN3 4SA  
020 8443 9631

[heron@northstartrust.org.uk](mailto:heron@northstartrust.org.uk)



### Kingfisher Hall Academy

40 The Ride, Enfield, London EN3 7GB  
020 8344 9890

[kingfisher@northstartrust.org.uk](mailto:kingfisher@northstartrust.org.uk)



### Woodpecker Hall Academy

Cuckoo Hall Lane, Edmonton, London N9 8DR  
020 8804 4126

[woodpecker@northstartrust.org.uk](mailto:woodpecker@northstartrust.org.uk)



## Absence request form

There is no automatic right for parents / carers to take their children out of school during term time.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the Department of Education will only allow a Head teacher to grant a leave of absence if there are **exceptional circumstances**. It is for the Head teacher to determine whether or not an absence in such circumstances can be authorised and the number of days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted.

Letters will **not** be accepted. **All absence requests must be completed on this form.**

The form **plus supporting evidence** should be returned to the school a minimum of 14 days before the start of the absence.

Academy (please tick): -			
 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>
Pupil's name: _____		Class: _____	
Home address and postcode <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>			
First date of absence: _____	Date of return to the academy: _____		
I / we request to take my / our child out of school during term time for the following reasons: - <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>			

I understand that if the request is unauthorised, the Education Welfare Service will be notified of the absence taken and a Penalty Notice could be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to *each* parent for *each* child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that non-payment will result in legal action.

Name of parent / carer making application: _____	
Signed: _____	Date: _____

**You will be notified in writing of the school's decision**

**FOR ACADEMY USE ONLY**

Pupil's name:	
Pupil's class:	
Current attendance:	%
Current unauthorised:	%
Dates requested from:	To:
Term time days in total:	
Term time sessions in total:	

**DECISION**

**AUTHORISED**

The request has been authorised for the following dates:

**UNAUTHORISED**

The request is unauthorised for the following dates:

Parents informed of the decision in writing

Information entered on database / pupil record

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Head teacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_