

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Worlaby Academy

Approved By	Academy Advisory Board June 2017
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Purpose

Regular and punctual attendance is important. Pupils need to attend the academy regularly, by law, if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Worlaby Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in the academy and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last academic day in July in the year they turn 11. Our policy applies to all children registered at this academy, within the age range detailed above, and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our academy on our website. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and members of the Academy Advisory Body (AAB) at our academy work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from the academy frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will affect their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and AAB members in our academy are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Achieve 100% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
 - Raise awareness to parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
 - Ensure that our policy begins to be embedded with Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
 - Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
 - Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
 - Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and AAB members on academy attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
 - Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at our academy.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from the academy for a legitimate reason and the academy has received a request prior to the absence and has granted a leave of absence.
 - Only the academy can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from the academy without the permission of the academy.
 - Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from the academy without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our academy will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, AAB members, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.

- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the academy.
 - To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
 - To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
 - To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality
 - To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to academy initiatives to improve.
 - To report attendance statistics to North Lincolnshire LA and the DfE where requested.
 - All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of our academy staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities, which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- Informing the Principal where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of academy attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the EWO service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the academy's EWO
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

Staff in the Academy Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring absences and late arrivals are recorded on SIMS
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Principal
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends the academy regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment that cannot be rearranged for outside of academy hours.
- Contacting the academy office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the academy in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are only authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Talking to the academy as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to the academy so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

The academy doors open at 8.45 am until 9.00 am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to enter the academy, organise their belongings and be ready in the classroom for registration at 9am. Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00 am. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present). These registers are then returned to the academy office. All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Between 8:50am and 9am, the only way to get into the academy is via the academy office. Any pupil who comes into the academy this way after 9.00am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U). Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to the academy later than 9.00 am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M); if a medical appointment card or letter has previously been provided. Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the academy will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the academy on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence, it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the SIMS system. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Principal has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from the academy and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. If we cannot contact you by telephone, we will make a visit to the home. If we cannot contact you when visiting the home, the police will be contacted.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from the academy long term, the academy will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the academy will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition. Where over the course of an academic year, a child has

repeated periods of illness, the academy will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the academy to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from the Academy for Holiday

With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of Principals to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Principals will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason, if they are satisfied, exceptional circumstances exist.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of 100%. It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Principal and the AAB members to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters, which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by academy with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the academy has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service. The Welfare and Inclusion Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to the service from the academy as part of the academy's processes to address poor attendance patterns. In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order. The Welfare Inclusion Officer visits as required to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%) and works with the academy to improve attendance. They may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the academy do not improve attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff, has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Principal to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.