



THE ACADEMY OF
**ST FRANCIS
OF ASSISI**

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Review Period	Two - Yearly
Person Responsible for Policy	Deputy Headteacher
Date of Trustees Approval	November 2020
Date for Review	November 2022

1. Introduction

The Academy of St Francis of Assisi recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for students within The Academy to support learning and achievement.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our young people every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all students attend regularly and on time. Students should aim to attend every day that the Academy is open. We set a target for all students to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all students achieve at least 97%. **As an Academy we define regular attendance as 97% or above.**

The Academy of St Francis of Assisi believes teachers, parents, carers, students and all members of The Academy community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring students attend to achieve. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

2. Aims

- Maximise the overall percentage of student attendance and punctuality at The Academy.
- Reduce the number of students who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the Academy community.
- Provide support advice and guidance for parents, students and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for students.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole Academy approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

2.1 Promoting Regular Attendance at The Academy of St Francis of Assisi

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and students. To help us all focus on this, The Academy will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to deter poor punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the Academy is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Students are provided with appropriate support to minimise disaffection from the Academy. This includes The Academy of St Francis of Assisi and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After students and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of students' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular individual student incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with students in form time and at assemblies.
- Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

3.0 Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending the Academy is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

Expectations of Students

- Ensure you arrive at The Academy by 8.43 am with the correct equipment.
- Be in your form class or outside line by 8.45am.
- Arrive to lessons on time.
- Always attend every lesson.
- Never leave the Academy site without permission.
- Always use the signing in/out system when late or leaving the Academy for appointments.
- Following any absence complete any missed work that may be provided by the Academy.

Expectations of Parent/Carer

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at the Academy is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from the Academy that is not authorised by the Academy creates an offence in law.
- Ensure your child leaves for the Academy on time.
- Telephone the Academy if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of the Academy's hours.
- Contact the Academy by 9.00 am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to the Academy.
- If a text message is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to this text to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact the Head of Year if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- In case of emergency we need up to date contact numbers at all times. Please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As an Academy we request a minimum of two emergency contact details be provided)
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for a one off absence. Unacceptable reasons include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays. Absence Forms can be requested from the Academy's reception.

3.1 If a student is absent we will

- Telephone and text parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.00 am.
- If no response is received after three days unauthorised absence, a member of the Academy staff will conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a student's absences are increasing, the parent/carer will be invited to meet the Attendance Officer/Head of Year.
- If absences persist the Attendance Officer/Head of Year will discuss actions with the Trust Attendance Manager

4.0 Understanding types of Absence

The Academy has to record every absence that a student takes and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise the Academy about the cause of any absence, by text or phone on the first day of absence and in writing on the student's return.

4.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the Academy has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parent/carers who make the decision to authorise absence from the Academy.

An authorised absence still classes as an absence and therefore will affect a student's attendance record.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is when the Academy has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from the Academy after a parents/carers request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents/carers giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained
- Students who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018 The Academy will issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 school days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the Academy will refer the case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

4.3 Persistent Absence

- Students are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects the Academy to intervene well before students reach a level of persistent absence.
- Whilst we understand that students can be absent from the Academy because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a student is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the Academy as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the Attendance Officer/Head of year in the first instance.

5.0 Why Regular Attendance is very important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect students' learning. Students who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- **90% attendance is equivalent to a student missing one half day of lessons per week or approximately 118 lessons per year**

The DFE has published a strong link between poor school attendance and low levels of achievement:

Students attendance	Chance of achieving 5 good pass grades at GCSE
100% - 96%	73% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades.
96% - 94%	64% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades.
93% - 90%	55% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades
80% to 70%	Only 20% chance of achieving 5 good pass grades
50% and below	Only 6% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at the Academy is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from the Academy is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

6.0 The Trust Attendance Manager (TAM)

- The Trust Attendance Manager provides support for parents/carer and advice on problems relating to attendance and encourages good communications between home and the Academy.
- The Trust Attendance Manager will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the student's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists, the Trust Attendance Manager will be required to give consideration to the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.

7.0 Leave of absence in Term Time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice fine for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from the Academy. Consent cannot be given retrospectively.

The Headteacher cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from the Academy if the leave is granted.

8.0 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss important messages, assembly and work and late arriving students disrupt lessons. It can be embarrassing for the student arriving late and can encourage future absence. A range of support and consequences apply to students who arrive late.

8.1 How we manage lateness

The Academy day starts and registers are taken at 8.45 am by the Form Tutor / class teacher and students receive a late mark if they are not in the building by 8.43am. The Academy recommends that students arrive at by 8.30 am and free breakfast is available from 8am.

- Students who arrive late to the Academy will be met by the Attendance Officer and will be instructed further on actions that will be taken.
- If a Y7 or Y8 student has two lates between Monday and Wednesday, they are issued a 30 minute consequence on Wednesday. If they are then late on Thursday or Friday, they are issued a 60 minute Friday consequence.
- If a Y9 to Y11 student are late, they complete a 30 minute consequence that day.
- If a student does not attend the pastoral detention that day, they will be expected to carry it out the following evening.
- If the student does not attend the following evening, they will attend the Reconciliation Centre the next day.
- If a parent/carer has any problem getting their child to attend the Academy on time they should contact the Head of Year who will offer support to resolve the problem.

9.0 People Responsible for Attendance matters at The Academy of St Francis of Assisi

All the Academy staff, parents/carers and students need to work as a team to support the attendance and attainment of students. This continued support therefore is vital in making every student's journey through the Academy a success.

10.0 Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As an Academy we are now required to:

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a student's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the student is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new students, including the student's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our Academy parents/carers are asked to:

- Give the Attendance Officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to The Academy in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires the Academy and the local authority to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Appendices

Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance

Whole School Approach

Whom	Actions Expected
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on the Academy site by 8.43 am. • Be in class / outdoor line up on time for registration at 8.45 am. • Be on time for lessons throughout the day.
Form Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set an example by arriving on time to register students by 8.35 am. • Registers are completed on SIMS each day on time (within 5 minutes). • Ensure attendance has a high profile in class. • Discuss absence with students returning to the Academy in a positive manner. • Welcome long-term absentees back into the class. • Discuss any concerns relating to a student absence with the Head of Year initiating follow up procedures.
Pastoral Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff have completed AM/PM registers. • Ensure input of accurate attendance marks in the register via SIMs. • Identify students who are absent from the Academy without reason (before break). • Log on SIMS parental voicemails, text messages and emails regarding student absences. • Ensure all late arriving students are spoken to and their attendance is entered on to SIMS. • First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no text message has been returned. • Support staff with registration queries, support the interventions of the Form Tutors. • Log attendance of all students going out/in school for medical, dental or visits. • Daily liaison with alternative curriculum providers for students off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and students who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the first day contact systems. • Daily late process: Log and send actions for Head of Year detention register and send report to all staff for students required to attend pastoral detention. • Daily Attendance/PA report sent to Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and pastoral team.
Attendance Officer/Head of Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Officer/HOYs informal discussions with identified students to follow up attendance issues and agree future actions required. • Attendance Officer/HOYs discuss with Form Tutors when required identified students of concern regarding specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required. • Communicate with parents/carers of students who are experiencing attendance difficulties and conversations logged on SIMs. • Communicate with TAM regarding appropriate further action with students and/or families. • Manage the pastoral detentions for students who arrive late.
Trust Attendance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistently absent students and families. • Text and phone call contact with students/parent/carers. • Home visits. • Review pre legal action plan/parent contract and arrange meetings as required. • Strategic legal interventions with identified students. • Tracking of actions and interventions supporting Pastoral Coordinators.
Deputy Head teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Tracking of staff not completing registers. • Liaison with TAM and pastoral coordinators regarding support work with identified students.