'*Live, love and learn* together in the light of Christ'

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Review Period:	Annually
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Person Responsible For Policy:	Assistant Headteacher
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"Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is too such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."

Mark 10:14

Pride Respect Ambition

Policy produced with reference to: DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance

1.0 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 our 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 children 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 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 follows the principle that "attendance is everybody's business" which therefore ensures students attend to achieve. This policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

2.0 Aims

1. Promote Regular Attendance
Encourage students to attend school every day and on time.
Reinforce the importance of consistent attendance for academic achievement and personal development.

2. Identify and Address Attendance Issues Early
Monitor attendance patterns to detect concerns (e.g. frequent absences, lateness).
Intervene early to prevent long-term disengagement or persistent absenteeism.

3. Support Students and Families
Provide guidance and support to families facing barriers to attendance (e.g. health, transport, family circumstances).
Work collaboratively with parents/carers to improve attendance.

4. Ensure Safeguarding
Use attendance data as part of safeguarding procedures to identify students who may be at risk.
Ensure that unexplained absences are followed up promptly.

5. Meet Legal and Statutory Requirements
Comply with national legislation and local authority guidance on school attendance.
Maintain accurate records and report attendance data as required.

6. Foster a Positive School Culture
Promote a school ethos where attendance is valued and rewarded.
Celebrate good attendance through recognition and incentives.

7. Clarify Roles and Responsibilities
Define the responsibilities of staff, students, parents/carers, and external agencies in promoting attendance.
Ensure consistent procedures for recording, monitoring, and responding to absences.
Raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community
Maximise the overall percentage of student attendance and punctuality.

Reduce the number of students who of persistently absent (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below)
Provide support advice and guidance for families, 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 there is a proactive whole school approach that embeds a consistency of practice.
Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, School Health and other partner agencies.

2.1 Promoting regular Attendance at St Francis of Assisi:

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, families and students.

To help us all focus on this, our Academy will ensure:

- there is a designated senior leader for championing and improving attendance.
- effective strategies are in place to deter poor punctuality.
- an engaging curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- high quality teaching and learning is delivered throughout the academy.
- students are provided with appropriate support from school and partner agencies to minimise disaffection from school.
- vulnerable groups are provided with effective support at the earliest opportunity and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- effective partnerships with families are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- families are kept informed of student attendance and punctuality through the academy's attendance procedures, 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 assemblies;
- attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.
- rewards are used to promote and encourage positive attendance by recognising and celebrating students who consistently attend school, thereby reinforcing the value of regular participation in learning.

3.0 Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence from school is required. All information retrieved from contact with families about a child's absence will be recorded on Arbor by the pastoral team. This information will be shared with our safeguarding team and EWO.

Families and students will regularly hear attendance messages through weekly Arbor reports, form time, assemblies, parent's evenings, termly progress reports and meetings when required.

Form tutor	To inform students of their weekly and year-to-date attendance data (Monday yr 7-10 and yr 11 Tuesday). Daily return to school conversations, (Weekly Arbor reports will indicate which students have hit 2 or more absent days in a term). Form tutors to have an informal conversation with the student on the day they return from an absence. Any concerns raised to be passed on to the Head of Year or the Attendance officer.

HOY	Daily communication (phone call/text/email) for absent students. Conversation logged on Arbor/Attendance. With specific reference to new guidance and fixed penalty warnings. Fortnightly meeting with Attendance Officer and Head of Year to discuss key cohorts and specific students.
Attendance Manager and Pastoral Support Worker	Weekly emails are sent to parents when a child has received unauthorised absence for that week. Home visits will be carried out on the third day of a student's absence, regardless of the reason, to ensure wellbeing and offer appropriate support. Daily Secondary calls are made when no reason for an absence has been established.
AO and Senior Leader Attendance Lead	Promote a culture where attendance is valued and improvements are recognised. Regularly review attendance data linked to their year group. Work closely with the Head of Year to identify trends, patterns, and concerns Support with formal processes such as attendance panels, parenting contracts Promote the importance of attendance to students, staff, and families. Support the Head of year when engaging with parents/carers to address barriers and build positive relationships.
AO and School Governor	Panel meetings will be held each term with a focus on key student cohorts identified for targeted attendance and punctuality support. Support with updates on new legal legislation and changes within the local authority.
AO and Family Engagement Officer	Work with students, families, and school staff to improve attendance. Support with Attendance contracts. Action single referral and case work forms If there is no improvement in attendance case work to EWO and EWO escalation procedure will commence. Providing updates on local authorities escalation process To report school and regional data.

3.1 Expectations of Parent/Carer

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.
- Ensure your child arrives for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours and confirmation of the appointment is provided.

- Contact school by 8.30am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend and select the option 1 to 'Auto Absence' giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school. The child's full name and form class should also be provided. Or report your child's absence through Arbor messaging service 'Planned absence'.
- Contact the child's Head of year if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.
- For a personal conversation relating to attendance, the following staff can be contacted:
    - Head of Year 7 Mr Ellison
    - Head of Year 8 Mrs McKechnie
    - Head of Year 9 Ms Thornber
    - Head of Year 10 Mr Bryant
    - Head of year 11 Mrs Mitchell
    - Attendance Officer: Mrs Bendall
    - SLT Attendance and Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Haig
- If a text message/phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- In case of emergency we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As an academy we request a minimum of three 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 short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays.

3.2 If a student is absent, we will:

- An absence notification via Arbor will be sent by 9am.
- HOY will complete First Day Response if no reason for absence has been obtained
- if no response is received, the pastoral key worker will make secondary calls within 24 hour period.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, contact will be made with the family as soon as possible, alongside contact with any external agencies such as a social worker.
- home visits are made to students of concern including students with 3 day absence and families where there is a safeguarding concern.
- if a student's absence continues the parent/carer will be invited to meet the Attendance Officer.
- if the parent/carer does not attend the meeting and the student has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence, the parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice Warning letter in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct and in agreement with the EWO.
- if unauthorised absences persist then we will discuss actions with the Education Welfare Officer.

4.0 Understanding types of Absence

The Academy of St Francis of Assisi has to legally record every absence. This is why it is important that parents/carers directly inform school regarding the reason for absence, on the first day of absence.

4.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence - the school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the attendance officer, not parents/carers who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence - when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence following a parental request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- parents 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 after the close of registration.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From 19th August 2024 Schools can issue a warning letter when a student has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct). Failure to improve after a 20-day warning period will result in a fine being 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 schools to intervene well before students reach a level of persistent absence.

Whilst we understand that students can be absent from school 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 school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.

Parent/Carers are asked to contact the head of year in the first instance.

Strategies used to support students who are persistently absent include:

- Opening an EHAT for early help and support
- Linking the family with a family Support Worker
- Referrals to Targeted services
- Parental contract and meetings
- Targeted support through 'Project PA'
- Personalised adjustments for the student
- Referral to the Educational Welfare Officer
- Educational Psychologist
- Safer School Police Officer

4.4 Severe Absence

Students who miss 50% or more of school are classified as being severely absent by the Department of Education (DfE) This cohort of students are a priority group for our academy and additional support may be required from the local authority and partner agencies to support your child improving their attendance. It is essential that parents/carers work in partnership with the school and its partners, to ensure their child receives the support they require to overcome any barriers that are preventing them from attending school.

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 per week or approximately 118 lessons per year.

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

The table below shows the relationship between the number of days a child is absent, the number of hours of lessons they will miss and their percentage attendance at the end of the school year.

0 - 2 Days off	**0 – 10 Lessons missed**	**99 - 100%**	➢ Excellent Attendance – student is accessing all learning opportunities ➢ Qualify for rewards including trips ➢ Praise communications & certificates
3 - 6 Days off	**15 – 30 Lessons missed**	**97 - 98%**	➢ Good – very few learning opportunities missed ➢ Likely to qualify for rewards including trips ➢ Praise communications & certificates
7 - 10 Days off	**35 – 50 Lessons missed**	**95 - 96%**	➢ Risk of underachievement ➢ Attendance monitoring ➢ Home visits ➢ Data is closely monitored & patterns investigated
11 - 18 Days off	**55 – 90 Lessons missed**	**91 - 94 %**	➢ Severe risk of underachievement ➢ At risk of being classed as having Persistent Absence ➢ Attendance panel with parents/carers to support the implementation of a Absence Support Plan ➢ Referral to the Trust's Family Engagement Officer
19 or more Days off	**95 or more Lessons missed**	**90% or less**	➢ Extreme risk of underachievement ➢ Persistent Absence ➢ Formal support from Educational Welfare Service ➢ Family Support Services referral for identified issues ➢ Senior Leadership involvement to develop plan to address absence

6.0 ASMAT Family Engagement Officer (FEO)

The All Saints Multi Academy Trust provide schools within the Trust a Family Engagement Officer who provides additional support for parents/carer and advice on problems relating to attendance, and encourages good communications between home and school.

The FEO 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 FEO will be required to consider the instigation of legal proceedings which include Parenting Contracts 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 to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave in term time 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 for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school 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 work and late arriving students disrupt lessons. It can be embarrassing for the student arriving late and can encourage future absence.

The school day starts at 8.40am, therefore students are expected to be in their class by this time. If students arrive to school after 8:40am, they will be asked to sign in using the academy's Inventry system and therefore receive a late mark. School recommends that students arrive by 8.30am.

- If a student arrives late to school, they are issued with a same-day lunch time detention.
    - If a student fails to attend their lunch time detention, in line with our Academy Behaviour Policy, this will roll over to a same-day after school detention for 30-minutes.
    - If a student continues to fail to attend their consequence for receiving a late mark, the consequence will follow the graduated approve which can be found in the Academy's Behaviour Policy.
- Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence (U Coded). This will affect the student's attendance. Student's will receive a 20-minute same day detention after school.
- Families will receive a weekly report from Arbor of their child's attendance and punctuality data for that week.
- If a student receives two or more late marks within the same week, they will be allocated a 90-minute SLT detention on Friday afternoon. This sanction is in addition to any same-day consequence issued for the individual late marks.
- If a student is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice. The close of registration is 9.10 am.

If a parent/carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the Attendance Team or their child's Head of Year who will offer support to resolve the problem.

Form tutor	Will monitor and discuss concerns of poor attendance and punctuality with the student.
Teaching staff	To issue a negative Arbor log 'Late to class' and complete an RP when a student arrives late to class – then follow behaviour system for persistent late to class.
HOY	Monitor year group lates to school through FDR and QA process of L and U codes. Collection of students for detentions, parental meetings.

Detentions:

Daily at lunch and after school from 30 – 60mins.
Weekly SLT Detention 90 minutes for 2 or more lates in one week.

Punctuality escalation system

Weekly reports sent to Form tutors and HOY

Systems for U code	Trigger	Consequence
STAGE 1	1 or more U code OR MORE U CODES	Letter triggered via Email sent home
STAGE 2	5 U CODES	Parental meeting with AO/HOY and SLT
STAGE 3	10 OR MORE**	FPN Warning Notice issued
STAGE 4	No improvement in breach of 20 day warning	FP ISSUED

** 10 week rolling period

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

All academy staff, families and students need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of students. This continued support therefore is vital in making every student's journey through school a success. Our aim is to foster a culture of positive attendance where systems are consistently applied to support the student in achieving their full potential.

Students will:

- arrive on time to be registered at 8.45am
- arrive at lessons on time
- never leave site without permission
- complete any missed work that is provided
- make their Head of Year aware of any issues that may affect their attendance

Parents/Carers will:

- ensure your child leaves on time in the morning
- telephone the school before 8.30am if your child is going to be late or absent
- respond to any messages sent to ensure your child is safeguarded
- contact the Head of Year if there are any issues that may affect attendance
- ensure the school has up to date contact numbers for a minimum of 3 emergency contacts
- arrange non-urgent medical or dental appointments for outside of academy hours
- avoid term time holidays
- work with us to improve your child's attendance and access any support agreed

Form Tutors & Teaching Staff will:

- take registers accurately and promptly within 5 minutes of the lesson starting using the correct register code
- ensure students are aware of how many absence days they may have had
- support the culture of positive attendance by promoting this and punctuality within the school community
- welcome students returning after an absence
- praise and reward students in line with school incentives
- communicate good news or improvement to students and parents/carers relating to whole school life
- challenge students whose attendance or punctuality is a concern
- contribute to support for individual students
- raise serious concerns with an appropriate member of staff

Heads of Year and the Attendance Team will:

- conduct first day response calls to parents/carers
- conduct home visits
- meet students and parents/carers where attendance and punctuality concerns arise and devise appropriate support
- challenge lateness with students and implement sanctions according the school systems
- promote good attendance and punctuality on a daily basis in form and assemblies
- maintain the accuracy of attendance coding, including ensuring registers are checked by the end of each day and 'N' codes (no reason for absence given) are converted within 5 days of the absence
- provide data for, and attend, fortnightly attendance/welfare team meetings
- work alongside the ASMAT Family Engagement Officer to complete referral forms and penalty notices

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- work with all members of the school community to promote and enforce high expectations of attendance and punctuality at all times including the implementation of the policy and development strategy
- consult the school community about the principles of the Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- contact families where concerns are raised including meetings to devise a plan of support
- ensure staff model good attendance and punctuality to lessons
- take all reasonable measures to protect the safety and wellbeing of students and staff
- work with external agencies to promote attendance and punctuality
  respond to trends in attendance data and apply intervention strategies to support identified cohorts
- support parents/carers to meet their parental responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality
- support, praise and reward students
- ensure the whole school staff are clear about the strategies for promoting excellent attendance and punctuality
- apply an escalated system for lateness
- promote regular attendance as part of school assemblies
  apply sanctions fairly, consistently, proportionately and reasonably; offering support where appropriate
  ensure the Attendance & Punctuality Policy does not discriminate against any pupil on the grounds of race, disability, sexual orientation or gender assignment
- make alternative provision for students who are unable to regularly attend the academy in order to minimise disruption to their education

10.0 Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Student 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 student's destination school and home address if the student is moving to a new school. School must complete an Exit form and submit to the **CME@liverpool.gov.uk** inbox.

- provide information to the LA when registering new students, including the student's address and previous school

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- provide the attendance officer with comprehensive information about their plans, including: any date of a move; your new address and telephone numbers; your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to school in writing;
- if a student leaves and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a child missing in education. This requires schools and local authorities to carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which may include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

11.0 Escalation process

Attendance escalation system

Weekly reports sent to Form tutors and HOY

Systems for O codes	Trigger	Action
Stage 1	Daily Absences	From tutor 'Welcome back' conversations, establish reasons for absence. HOY – FDR process
Stage 2	Unauthorised absence notification	Weekly Email sent from Arbor warning parents about unauthorised absences, requesting they contact the school.
Stage 3	10 sessions Missed	Meeting with AO and FEO – Attendance Support Plan implemented FPN warning Issued **
Stage 4	No improvement after 20 day warning period	Family Engagement Officer Referral Fine maybe issued

** 10 day rolling period

Persistent Absence (PA) Monitoring

12.0 Legal sanctions

Where supportive intervention has failed to improve a student's attendance it may become necessary for the academy to employ formal actions.

Penalty Notice:
A Penalty Notice of £80 if paid in 21 days, will increase to £160 if paid in 28 days will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A student has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve
  Failure to pay may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Liverpool City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Prosecution:
Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrate's Court may be taken. The school will provide evidence for prosecution under Section

444 of the Education Act 1996. This states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child, if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and/or be imprisoned for up to 3 months.

Alternatives to prosecution include Parenting Contracts or an Education Supervision Order.
Appendices ***– working towards best practice - (Example guidance for strategies used in schools)***

Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Students	• Arrive on school site by 8.30am • Be in class on time for registration at 8.40am
	Class Teacher	• Registers are completed on the MIS system each day within the first 10 minutes of every lesson • Ensure attendance has a high profile in class • Discuss absence with students returning to school • Welcoming pupils back into school after an absence
	Curriculum Leaders	• Curriculum leaders' informal discussions with identified students to follow up attendance issues and agree future action required. • Curriculum leaders discuss with class teachers when required identified students of concern regarding specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required.
	Safeguarding & Attendance Team & Head of Years	• Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistent absence students and families. • Phone call contact with students/parent/carers • Home visits • Instigation of legal proceedings • Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to pastoral staff.
	Designated Senior Leader	• Monitoring and tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements. • Liaison with EWO, Pastoral staff and Curriculum Leaders regarding support work with identified students.

When	Whom	Actions Expected
WEEKLY	Class teacher	• Ensure all members of the class know the school target and their current attendance • Monitor/follow up identified student absence by liaising with the students Head of year • Update information on attendance boards

	Pastoral Staff	• Informing attendance officer and EWO of student patterns of absence. • Provide weekly student attendance figures for DSL for attendance, class teachers and student rewards • Discuss punctuality issues with identified students and parent/carers • Provide weekly punctuality data for the DSL for attendance, class teacher and student rewards
	Curriculum Leader	• Organise help for students to catch up on missed work due to prolonged absence
	Designated Senior Leader	• Monitoring and Tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements. • Liaison with FEO, HOY and curriculum leaders regarding support work with identified students • Determine priority actions for the following week

When	Whom	Actions Expected
HALF TERMLY	**Designated Senior Leader**	• Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to student achievement • Use attendance data to identify and act to improve the attendance of vulnerable students • Ensure that all teaching staff focus on attendance in planning and pedagogy • Determine priority actions for the next half term
	Pastoral Staff	• Monitor and track attendance SA /PA Action Plans • Liaise with FEO to share information and agree joint actions re action plans or other students causing concern

TERMLY	**Designated Senior Leader**	• The importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all students both in school and those at offsite provision • Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to SLT, for plans to raise attendance • Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across the school and that systems are operating effectively. • Report in detail each term to SLT and the Local Academy Council on attendance matters • Ensure academy prospectus, parent/carers welcome booklet and academy newsletters promote attendance • Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents' evenings • Determine priority actions for the next term.
	Headteacher	• Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and the Local Academy Council.