

**Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust  
and  
Thomas Telford School**



**Attendance Policy**

**Prepared by: Sir Kevin Satchwell**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**Signed:**

**Review Date:**

**This policy summarises the expectations required from all Schools/Academies within Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust (TTMAT) and Thomas Telford School (TTS). Further details are contained in the DfE Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance published 29 February applicable from 19 August 2024. The Guidance should be read in conjunction with this Policy.**

Extract from Statutory Guidance applicable from 19 August 2024

### ***Working together to improve attendance***

*Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:*

#### *Expect*

*Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.*

#### *Monitor*

*Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.*

#### *Listen and understand*

*When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.*

#### *Facilitate support*

*Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.*

#### *Formalise support*

*Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.*

#### *Enforce*

*Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.*

## **The Law and day to day processes**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

There is a strong link between persistent absence and crime.

The law requires that all schools must have an admission register.

Appropriate national attendance and absence codes must be used.

Schools/Academies should only grant leave of absence under exceptional circumstances.

Lateness should not exceed 30 minutes.

Where possible Schools /Academies should hold more than one emergency contact number.

Statutory returns to the LA and DfE must be complied with.

All schools must have an electronic management information system which can be accessed by the DfE.

### **As a minimum what leaders, staff, pupils, and parents need to understand:**

- It should be made clear to all parties that attendance and punctuality, expectations of pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leave of absence and informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence are appropriately followed.
- All Schools/Academies should appoint a Senior Attendance Officer.
- All Schools/ Academies should provide contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance. It is sensible to have a triage system to facilitate for more detailed support where appropriate for complex cases.
- Day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence should be in place for all schools/Academies.
- How to incentivise good attendance.
- Data to target attendance improvement should be readily available for teachers', leaders, and Governors.
- All School/Academies should provide a strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.
- Details of the National Framework for Penalty Notices and when Notices to Improve, penalty notices or other legal interventions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for a holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

### **TTMAT, TTS and Local Governing Boards**

All trusts and governing bodies are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Multi-academy trust boards and governing bodies of federations are also expected to:

- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Monitor attendance patterns.

### **Local Authority (LA) and Safeguarding Partnerships**

The LA and safeguarding partnership have a key role to play regarding attendance.

They are facilitators of wider support. They should provide a minimum support service and be used to support schools. They should have a support team, offer advice, provide family support and if needed take legal action.

It is important that all our schools have a clear understanding of what service the LA can provide and what their expectations are from the schools.

The LA must provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance support team. Each Academy must know the contact details of the named contact.

The LA can apply legal intervention to support schools where appropriate including issuing penalty notices or prosecute.

The LA can provide additional support services and help families which in turn can impact on school attendance.

LAs should communicate with each other when working with cross border pupils.

### **Persistent and severe absence**

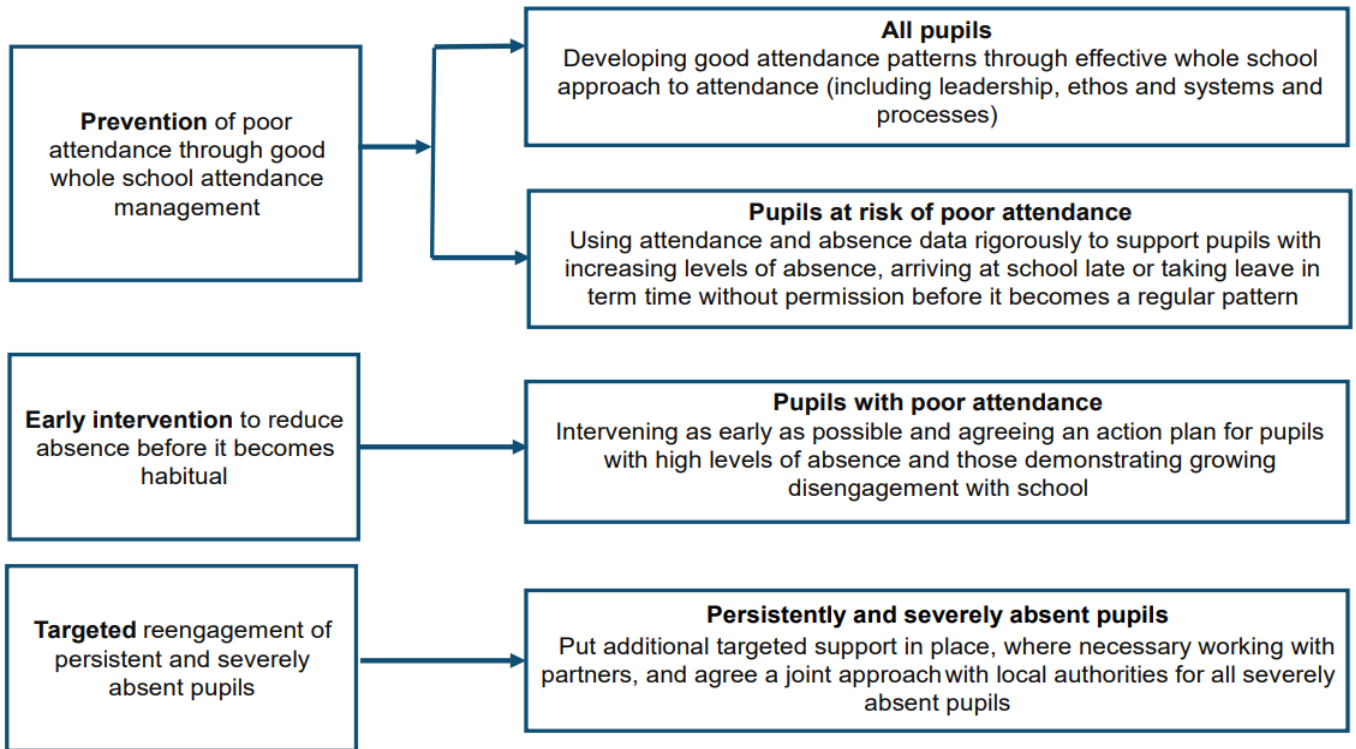
Targeted support should be in place for pupils who miss 10% or more of school.

Appropriate services should work together to ensure that those pupils with less than 50% attendance should be given top priority.

Where partners are unable to impact upon severe absences a full social care assessment should be conducted in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

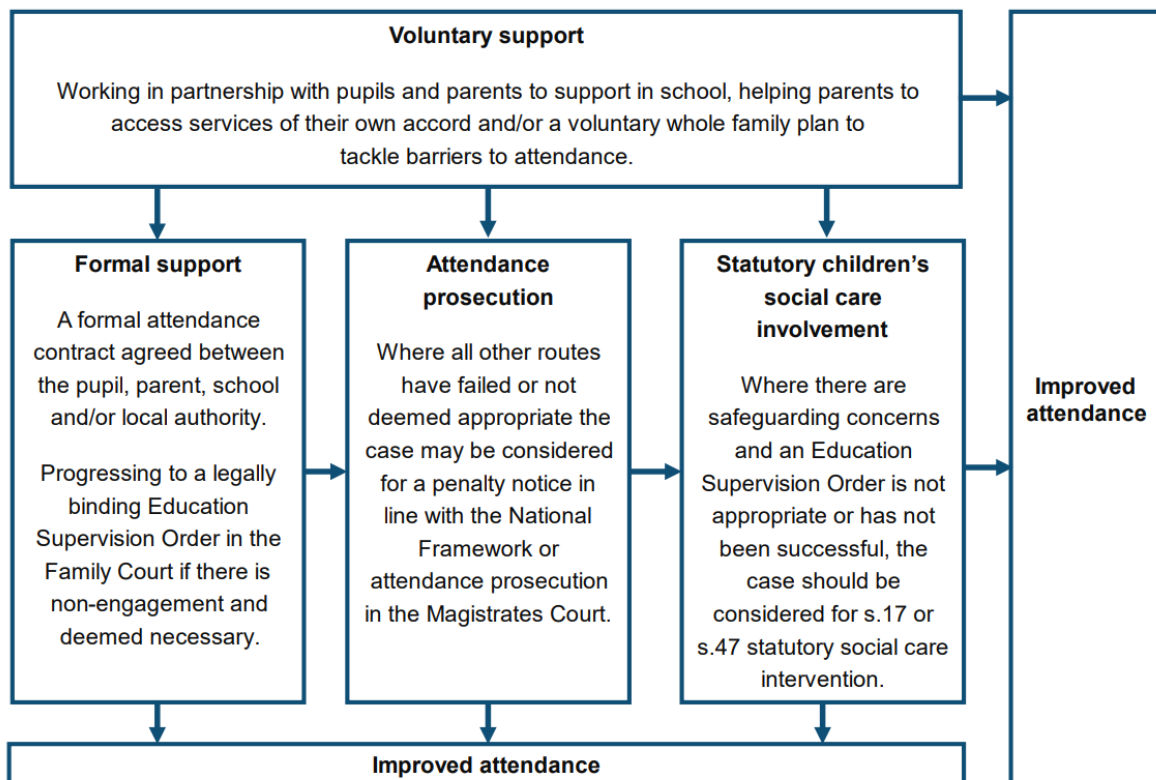
Extract from Statutory Guidance

### Effective school attendance improvement and management



Extract from Statutory Guidance

### Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



Further details in relation to contracts, Education Supervision Orders (ESO), prosecutions, parenting orders and penalty notices are contained in Statutory Guidance paras 134 to 200.

Headteachers, Safeguarding leads and Senior Attendance officers appointed by Academies should familiarise themselves with legal intervention strategies and ensure that appropriate data is shared regularly with Governors.

### **Admissions Register**

The school admission register must be kept in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The admission register must be kept electronically.

### **Deletion of names**

Where a school notifies the local authority that a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information about the pupil from the admission register:

- full name;
- address;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency;
- if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there.

Off-rolling without following the appropriate procedure, which includes informing the LA must not happen.

### **All Schools/Academies must follow the updated use of registration codes as follows.**

Extract from DfE Statutory Guidance

**Code / \:** Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session 286. Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as attending for statistical purposes.

**Code L:** Late arrival before the register is closed 288. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. If a pupil is marked N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to mark them as absent using code U.

**Code K:** Attending education provision arranged by the local authority 290. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority.

A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. 291. Schools must also record the nature of the provision, examples are: • attending courses at college; • attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring.

**Code V:** Attending an educational visit or trip. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school.

**Code P:** Participating in a sporting activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.

**Code W:** Attending work experience. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education.

**Code B:** Attending any other approved educational activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience.

**Code D:** Dual registered at another school. The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up.

**Code C1:** Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence issued by a local authority or a BOPA; as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. It is at the discretion of the school to grant leave of absence.

**Code M:** Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.

**Code J1:** Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.

**Code S:** Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence for a pupil to study for a public examination and the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence).

**Code X:** Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.

**Code C2:** Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. This requires a start and finish date of any agreement and should be short term.

**Code C:** Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**Code T:** Parent travelling for occupational purposes.

**Code R:** Religious observance. The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves). The school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C.

**Code I:** Illness (not medical or dental appointment). The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).

**Code E:** Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made. The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education. When a pupil of compulsory

school age is suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, academy, city technology college, or city college for the technology of the arts, alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day of any suspension or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made for the session in question and the pupil is attending it, schools should record this using the appropriate attendance code, or if the pupil is attending another school at which they are a registered pupil, schools should record this using code D (dual registered at another school).

**Code Q:** Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.

**Code Y1:** Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.

**Code Y2:** Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.

**Code Y3:** Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.

**Code Y4:** Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

**Code Y5:** Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.

**Code Y6:** Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance.

**Code Y7:** Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question.

**Code G:** Holiday not granted by the school.

**Code N:** Reason for absence not yet established 393. Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.

If a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to **Code O**. 395. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

**Code O:** Absent in other or unknown circumstances.

**Code U:** Arrived in school after registration closed.

**Code Z:** Prospective pupil not on admission register. To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.

**Code #:** Planned whole school closure.



## **Other relevant legislation and guidance**

The Education Acts 1996 and 2002

The Children Act 1989 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Sentencing Act 2020

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013

The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963

The Equality Act 2010

Relevant government guidance

Children missing education

Keeping children safe in education and Working together to safeguard children Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

Elective home education

Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities

Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges

Preventing and tackling bullying Providing remote education.

## Some Draft Letters

UNAUTHORISED TERM TIME LEAVE LETTER DATE ADDRESS RE:

Dear

Request for Term-time Absence.

Thank you for your letter requesting term-time leave of absence for xxxxxx on the yyyyyy.

While I understand your situation, I am sorry to tell you that I am not able to authorise your request as it does not meet the Government guidelines for exceptional circumstances.

SUSPECTED HOLIDAY LETTER

Dear

I am writing about absence from school from xxxxxx to yyyyyy.

Due to information received from other sources we believe that this was because to a family holiday. You have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time and this will be recorded on xxxxxx attendance record.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING SYSTEM LETTER

Dear

Following a recent attendance review I understand that has had authorised absence due to illness and that you called the school to keep us informed. We would just like to let you know how this has affected attendance which is currently at xx% This letter is purely to inform you of the statistics, and I hope you understand that school has a duty to do so.

REVIEW LETTER

Dear

Following a recent attendance review I am writing to advise you that school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to xx% and as a result we are becoming concerned that yyyyyy is missing a significant part of learning. I have enclosed a copy of attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

## REVIEW LETTER REQUESTING MEETING

Dear

I am writing to inform you that xxxxxx attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance could affect progress and we need to meet with you. Please could you attend a meeting with me to discuss this matter further on the date and time below. This meeting will give you the opportunity to explain the percentage of attendance and will help the school maintain an accurate picture. If you are unable to attend please let us know so that an attendance meeting can be rescheduled.

Date:

Time:

## LETTER CONFIRMING DETAILED AGREEMENTS

Dear

I appreciate that you were able/I am sorry that you were unable to attend/rearrange the meeting scheduled for as requested in my letter dated xxxxxx. It has been noted that attendance is now at xx%. Due to this the following targets need to be met;

- attendance needs to show improvement to 90%+ over the next xxxxxx weeks
- Monitoring period will be xxxxxx to yyyyyy
- Medical evidence is to be supplied to explain absences due to illness.
- Etc

As a parent it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which they are registered, regularly and punctually.

## LETTER LATENESS

Dear

I have noted during a recent attendance review that your child is beginning to show a pattern of lateness. It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child's education, I would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss this. Please note that if your child arrives after registers close this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

REQUEST FOR REMOVAL/DELETION FROM THE SCHOOL ROLL

Parental notice of child(ren) leaving the school and requiring removal from the school roll Please complete as appropriate.

Name of Child(ren):

DOB(s):

Class(es):

Current Home Address:

Current Telephone Number:

Current E-mail Address:

Leaving Date:

Reason for Leaving:

We are moving Date:

New Home Address:

New Telephone Number:

We are moving abroad Date:

New Home Address: Country:

I have registered my child(ren) at another school :

Start Date:

Name of School:

Telephone Number:

I am going to educate my child(ren) at home and have informed the school in writing.

Start date:

Parent/Carer:

Printed Name:

# Appendix – Sandwell Academy Attendance Policy

Sandwell Academy has high aspirations and your child can play their part in making these a reality. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to aim for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day. The Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

## 1. Roles and responsibilities

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff in the Academy.

### 1.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 1.2 The head teacher

The head teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 1.3 The designated Deputy Head responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated Deputy Head responsible for attendance is Mrs. Chapman and can be contacted via 0121 525 1700 or [jchapman@sandwellacademy.com](mailto:jchapman@sandwellacademy.com)

## 1.4 The Attendance Manager

The school attendance manager is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the head teacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the head teacher/Deputy Head with responsibility for Attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Manager is Miss Zanib and can be contacted via 0121 525 1700 or [hzanib@sandwellacademy.com](mailto:hzanib@sandwellacademy.com)

## 1.5 Class Teachers/Personal Tutors

Class teachers/personal tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the attendance manager via BROMCOM.

## 1.6 School admin staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the head of year/pastoral lead/ PT's in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

## 1.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Complete the '*explanations for absence*' section of their child's planner which should be presented to the PT on the first day of their return. The PT will inform the Attendance team that this has been provided.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Ensure that, the Academy are made aware of appointments with 48 hours' notice when they take place during the school hours. A copy of the medical appointment will need to be provided to the school office for the leave of absence to be approved.

## 1.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session, including PT, on time
- Register for every Session 3 they attend after school

## 2. Recording Attendance

### 2.1 Start and Close of the Day

The school day starts at **8:15am** and teaching begins at 8.20am. We expect your child to be in class at 8:20am for uniform and equipment checks. Registers will close as teaching begins at 8.20am.

At **9:00am**, the registers will be closed in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, if your child arrives after that time and cannot give a valid reason, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence on their attendance record. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

### 2.2 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of session 1 at the beginning of each school day and during the PT time.

It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. **See pages 5-7 of this document for the DfE attendance codes.**

## 2.3 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school attendance manager.

The school can be notified by one of the following methods:

**Phone call: 0121 525 1700**

**Text message: 07520633445**

**Email: absence@sandwellacademy.com**

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. If a student is considered to be persistently absent (<90%) we will request medical evidence on each occasion. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Parents must complete the '*explanations for absence*' section of their child's student planner. The planner should be presented to the PT on the first day of their return. The PT will inform the Attendance team that this has been provided.

## 2.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school **48 hours' in advance** of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

A copy of the medical/dental appointment will need to be provided to the school office (either paper copy or emailed to attendance manager) for the leave of absence to be approved. If proof of attendance is not provided the Academy reserves the right to leave a child's attendance as unauthorised.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 2.5 Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and time with their class teacher receiving vital information for the lesson ahead. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child, inconvenient for the teacher and distracting for other students. This can also encourage absence.

### How we manage lateness:

- A student who arrives late (after 8.20am) will be signed in at the late gate by the attendance officer
- If a student received **three** late events during a school week they will be issued with a Stage 1 Conduct Review, as outlined in the Academy's Behaviour Policy.



## 2.6 Truancy

Evidence shows that students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results. Furthermore, students who performed better at the end of secondary school missed fewer days than those who did not perform as well. As a school, we will tackle students who are not only missing out on valuable learning time, but whose actions are disrupting the learning of others. It is both a safeguarding and behaviour concern when students are in school and not properly accounted for.

On the rare occasions where a student is absent from Sandwell Academy without the knowledge of their parent/carer, the following procedure will be followed:

- The student's absence on this occasion will not be authorised
- The student and parent/carer will be asked to attend a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity, in order to discuss the reasoning behind the student's decision to truant from the Academy

Immediate action will be taken when we suspect a student of internal truancy from lesson/PT. Students found on the corridors without a corridor pass/movement slip will be challenged about why they are not in lesson/PT. The following procedure will be followed:

- The member of staff on duty will walk the student back to their lesson/PT to ascertain if they have permission to be out of class.
- If the student is confirmed as truanting this will be logged on MCAS.
- The student will receive a 60 minute Conduct Review the next day. Parents will receive notification on MCAS of this.

Persistent truancy will be treated seriously and further actions will be taken should a positive change not be seen. This may include:

- Further sanctions in line with the Academy Behaviour Policy
- Support strategies implemented where necessary
- Close monitoring of the student's attendance for the remainder of the term
- Future absence without a valid reason will not be authorised

Persistent unauthorised absence can be used to instigate court proceedings under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996

Parents and carers, are welcome to raise any concerns they may have regarding their child's persistent reluctance to attend school with the student's Personal Tutor or the Attendance Officer.

## 2.7 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send a text message to the student's parent/carer via our electronic monitoring system on the morning of the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Follow this with a telephone call where necessary. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, contact siblings schools or contact the police.
- Attempt to make contact after more than two days of absence to check on progress – this will usually be done by your child's Personal Tutor;

- Invite you in to the Academy discuss the situation with your child's Personal Tutors and/or the Academy Attendance Manger.
- If absences continue, the school will consider involving the Sandwell Council's School Attendance Support Officer.

## **2.8 Reporting to parents/carers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about various issues, including absence, so we need to have the correct contact details for you at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have up to date contact details, including mobile telephone numbers and email addresses. There will be regular checks on contact details throughout the year. We require as a minimum details of two contacts per student

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via:

- My Child At School (MCAS)
- Termly module reports
- Personal Tutor conversations
- Half termly attendance letters from the Attendance Manager

## 3. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 3.1 Approval for term-time absence

If you choose to take your child out of school during term time without leave of absence being granted then it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on the school register.

It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us. This includes:

- When a student is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods, GCSE, A-Level or any other public examinations.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a student's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance. Exceptional circumstances **do not include** family holidays, visiting relatives or friends, spectating at sporting or other events, looking after unwell family members, babysitting younger family members, birthdays or shopping.

If you consider that a request for leave of absence during term time is for 'exceptional circumstances' then this should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least **four** weeks the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the Academy Website or requested from the Attendance Manager. All forms will need to be returned to the Deputy Head with Responsibility for Attendance via Reception.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Please note, the headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by refraining from taking holidays during term time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. **There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.**

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include but are not limited to:

- the death of a close relative and/or attendance at a funeral
- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

### 3.2 Legal sanctions

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the Attendance Manager may refer the child to the Deputy Head with responsibility for Attendance and to the Head Teacher where necessary. We will try to resolve the situation by agreement but if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Head can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions.

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 4. Strategies for promoting attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all members of school staff. At the Academy we believe that providing regular recognition for good and improved attendance sends a clear message that being in school every day is a priority.

The following strategies will be used to engage **students**:

- Welcoming and positive culture – this includes ensuring lessons are engaging and that students want to attend, teachers are approachable, friendly and encouraging and an effective behaviour policy is implemented whole school.
- Raised profile of attendance:
  - Assistant Head of Year as attendance champion in each year group
  - Internal truancy protocol
  - Weekly attendance statistics shared with all staff
  - Posters around Academy to promote punctuality and attendance
  - Introduce a 'buddy system' where a student who has good punctuality/attendance is buddied up with a student whose punctuality/attendance is less than satisfactory, to try to encourage improved attendance.
- 100% club:
  - Automatic positive awarded to students for weekly 100% attendance
  - house points awarded to PTs with highest attendance statistics half termly
  - each time a student achieves weekly 100% attendance their name is placed into 'attendance cup' – prize drawn once per half term
  - postcards and pudding prizes for improved attendance and 100% attendance over a half term or term
  - Rewards through class competitions, certificates and outings / events.
- Delivering 'attendance mentoring sessions' that focus on the impact of low attendance on friendships and achievement
- Targeted intervention and support for students identified as persistent or severe absentees.
- Positively welcoming students back into lessons following a period when they have been late or absent.

Parental partnership and support will be sought through:

- MCAS which reports a student's attendance figures
- PT contact when your child is absent for two or more consecutive days
- PT meeting where attendance is 90% or below;
- Regular updates on attendance in our termly mailings;
- Regular module reports to outline how your child is performing in school, their attendance and punctuality rate and how this relates to their attainments;

We acknowledge that poor emotional wellbeing or feelings of anxiety can act as a barrier to school attendance and as an Academy, we are committed to supporting students to feel safe and secure in school. To reduce Emotion-Based School Avoidance (EBSA), we do the following:

- Having clear systems of referral for students struggling with emotional wellbeing
- Place2Be and other forms of counselling
- Mental health workshops and interventions
- Referrals to appropriate external services, such as Inclusion Support and Single Point of Access (SPA)
- Staff who are specifically trained in EBSA support

It is vital that working to improve school attendance is proactive rather than reactive, and as such, students who begin to form a pattern of absence will work with a member of the Welfare to complete an Emotion-Based School Avoidance assessment to try and identify the factors pushing students away from school, and the factors pulling them in. Following this, relevant support will be put in place.

## 5. Attendance Monitoring

### 5.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 5.2 Analysing attendance

The Academy has set targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. The minimum target of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 5.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance bulletins to class teachers/personal tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 5.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more schooling across the academic year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we require parents' fullest support and co-operation in order to tackle this.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. Meetings will follow the escalation process outlined below:

Threshold	Attendance	Action
1	<96%	PT contact home, discussion of reasons for low attendance with parent/carers and student. Support put in place where possible. PT monitors attendance for two weeks
2	<93%	Meeting – AHOY, Attendance Manger and PT
3	<90%	Meeting – HOY and Attendance Manager Attendance contract Local authority involvement – possible prosecution

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Make all PA cases known to the Head Teacher.

## 6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 12 months by the Deputy Head with responsibility for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## 8. Staff Members Responsible for Attendance Matters

The following staff can be contacted with regards to attendance matters:

Staff	Responsibility
Mrs. J Chapman	Deputy Head with responsibility for Attendance
Miss H Zanib	Attendance Manager
Miss S Kossar	Attendance Officer
	Year 7
Mr C Ferguson	Year 8
	Year 9
Mrs. H Sharif	Year 10
Mr R Smith	Year 11
Mrs. S Gill/Mrs. L Hamill	Sixth Form

## 9. GDPR and DPA Complaints

All Staff must be aware of the complaints process. All complaints should be directed to the Data Protection Compliance Manager / Data Protection Officer. If any member of staff is aware that a person wishes to complain they should direct the person to the school website and complaints policy and form.

Data Protection Compliance Manager / Data Protection Officer is responsible for dealing with all complaints in line with this procedure.

The school complaints policy sets out the complaints process. This will be the basis for dealing with Data Protection Complaints and appeals. A written outcome will be provided.

If the school does not comply with a Subject Access Request within one month (subject to any extension), or refuses all or part of the request, written reasons will be provided, setting out the principles for the refusal. The data subject(s) will be notified of the right to complain directly to the Information Commissioner, whose details will be in the response.