

Attendance Policy 2020

The Midland Academies Trust

Executive Principal



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Attendance Policy 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Midland Academies Trust (the Trust) is established by North Warwickshire & Hinckley College to provide governance and oversight to those academies that are part of the Trust. These include:
 - i. The Nuneaton Academy;
 - ii. The George Eliot School;
 - iii. Hartshill School;
 - iv. Heath Lane Academy.
- 1.2 This Policy and Procedure applies to each of the Academies listed above.
- 1.3 The Trust is committed to providing a full and effective education for all students to ensure that they achieve their potential in all that they do. Students need to attend school regularly if they are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities that each Academy provides. Statistics support that good attendance links to increased attainment. Therefore, promoting good attendance is a priority for the Trust and each Academy will continue to develop a positive ethos which will highlight and promote good attendance and punctuality.
- 1.4 Legislation directly relating to attendance at the Academy includes:
 - i. Education Act 1996
 - ii. Education Act 2011
 - iii. Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
 - iv. Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
 - v. Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
 - vi. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
 - vii. Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 & 2013
 - viii. Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
 - ix. Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

2. General Principles

- 2.1 The aims and objectives of this policy are to:
 - i. create an ethos in each Academy in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every student aims for excellent attendance;
 - ii. make attendance and punctuality a priority for all associated with each Academy;
 - iii. promote good teaching since this provides the best incentive for students to attend the Academy;
 - iv. set focused targets to improve individual student attendance and whole school attendance levels;
 - v. create a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality;
 - vi. record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism;
 - vii. develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data;

- viii. provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students and develop mutual co-operation between home and Academy in encouraging good attendance and in addressing attendance issues;
- ix. demonstrate through the use of rewards that each Academy recognises that good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves;
- x. promote effective partnership with the Warwickshire Attendance Service and Education Welfare Service in Leicestershire and other services and agencies and follow their standard approaches in managing attendance issues.

3. Statutory Duty of Schools

- 3.1 Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

4. Parental Responsibility and/or Day to Day Care

- 4.1 The Education Act 1996 section 7 defines the Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

(7) The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,*
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- 4.2 The Education Act 1996 section 576 defines the meaning of "parent".

(1) In this Act, unless the context of otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person-

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*
- (b) who has care of him,*
except that in section 499(8) it only includes such a person if he is an individual.

5. Local Authority Responsibility

- 5.1 If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/guardian is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at schools, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend can be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, section 444 1A (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).
- 5.2 Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced new powers in relation to issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. This was updated with, The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendment Regulations 2012, followed by additional amendment Regulations 2013 (coming into force on 1st September 2013).

- 5.3 Penalty notices must be issued in a manner which conforms to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all relevant Equal Opportunities Legislation. To this aim each Local Authority has a Code of Conduct in relation to issuing Penalty Notices.

6. Academy Timings

- 6.1 Students are expected to attend the Academy for the full 190 days of the Academic year and in accordance with the published term times, unless there is good reason for absence.
- 6.2 The Academy day starts at 8.45am for Year 7, 9.15 for Year 8 and 9 and 9.45am for year 10 and 11 when all students are expected to be in their designated area for registration. The afternoon session is varied for year groups due to staggered timetables, please see school website for the timings. When all students are expected to be in their designated area for registration. Students arriving later than these timings will be marked as late.
- 6.3 Any students arriving 45 minutes (i.e. 9.30am) after the start of each session will be recorded as Unauthorised Late (U code); unless a valid reason, in writing, for absence are supplied by parents.

7. Authorising Absence

- 7.1 Only Principals and/or designated members of staff have the authority to authorise or not authorise absences. The Academy will code all absences in line with the Department for Education School Attendance Coding Guidance.
- 7.2 There are two types of absence:
- i. authorised - where the Academy approves student absence;
 - ii. unauthorised - where the Academy will not approve the absence.
- 7.3 Authorised absences are those which the Academy deem to be acceptable, such as genuine illness, attendance at an interview, religious observance or other legitimate off-site events and these are coded accordingly in the Academy's attendance records and for monitoring purposes.
- 7.4 An unauthorised absence is when a student is absent without prior authorisation from the Academy and/or when no justifiable reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer.

8. Roles and Responsibilities in Managing Attendance, Absenteeism, Punctuality and Lateness

8.1 Parents/Carers

- 8.1.1 Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend the Academy regularly and may risk prosecution if they fail in this responsibility.
- 8.1.2 Parents/carers should also ensure that their children arrive at school on time, with the correct equipment and in full school uniform.
- 8.1.3 Parents/carers should support the Academy by avoiding, if possible, non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during Academy time.
- 8.1.4 Parents/carers should be aware that they do not have the automatic right to take their child out of the Academy for a holiday during term time.
- 8.1.5 It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to inform the Academy of the reason for a child's absence on each day of absence and in line with the Academy's procedures for informing of absence. These procedures can be obtained from the Academy website. If possible, the expected day of return should also be provided. Contact will be made with parent/carers who

have not advised the school the reasons for absence. Contact will be by letter, email, phone call, truancy text or home visit.

- 8.1.6 All unexplained absences will be investigated and parents/carers will be kept informed about any attendance concerns relating to their own child. Parents/carers are expected to attend meetings when requested and support the Academy in responding to ongoing attendance concerns.

8.2 Students

- 8.2.1 All students should aim to have an excellent attendance and punctuality record for which there will be appropriate rewards.
- 8.2.2 All students are expected to be on the Academy site on time and ready to learn. Students are also expected to be punctual to all lessons and preparation/tutor time.
- 8.2.3 Students who arrive at school late must follow the correct procedures for recording their lateness and entering into their lesson. These procedures can be obtained on the George Eliot school website. All pupils report to reception if they are late to sign in.
- 8.2.4 Students who need to leave school for a medical appointment must follow the correct procedures for recording that they have permission to leave and have left the building. Notification needs to come to the school and the pupil needs to exit via reception ensuring they sign out.
- 8.2.5 Students must not leave the Academy without permission, 'truant'; this will be seen by the school as a Safeguarding concern as well as a Health and Safety concern.

8.3 Form Tutors

- 8.3.1 The form tutor is the key person in promoting regular punctual attendance. The form tutor will:
- i. provide a good example by always being punctual to registration, give a high profile to attendance and punctuality and praise students who arrive on time;
 - ii. keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance following the current agreed procedures;
 - iii. follow the attendance policy procedures when dealing with absences and punctuality;
 - iv. maintain swift action and effective communication with the Attendance Officer and Senior Manager on all attendance matters concerning the tutor group;
 - v. ensure that students are aware of the whole Academy attendance target and their own individual attendance target and where appropriate assist them in monitoring their own attendance rates;
 - vi. ensure that students receive rewards/sanctions in relation to attendance and punctuality, in line with the Academy Behaviour Policy;
 - vii. build a welcoming atmosphere in the tutor group and provide support as necessary when students return after an absence.

8.4 Teaching Staff

- 8.4.1 Teaching staff are key to promoting punctuality to lessons and ensuring that students are actively attending to their learning. They will:
- i. provide a good example by arriving on time to lessons and welcoming students with a 'meet and greet' approach;
 - ii. carry out a register of the class at the beginning of each lesson (within the first 10 minutes) so that punctuality is promoted and late students are recorded together with the number of minutes late;
 - iii. follow up any student missing by informing the Attendance Officer as soon as possible;

- iv. provide relevant, appropriately challenging learning opportunities to engage students in learning and thus promoting attendance and punctuality;
- v. be supportive of students when they have been absent in providing them with strategies to catch up on any missed work;
- vi. in liaison with the Student support manager, they provide appropriate work for students on authorised long-term absence, e.g. medical conditions;
- vii. build a welcoming atmosphere in the lesson and provide support as necessary when students return after an absence;
- viii. for out of school trips inform the Attendance Officer of those students who are attending the trip and those students who are in alternative curriculum to their timetable and maintain a register whilst participating in the trip.

8.5 Pastoral Leader

8.5.1 The Pastoral Leader is responsible for monitoring the attendance of the year group and regular promotion of attendance and punctuality. They will:

- i. ensure that their tutor team is aware of their responsibilities with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality and adherence to the attendance policy and procedures;
- ii. ensure that rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality are set in line with and issued in accordance with the Academy Behaviour Policy;
- iii. monitor and track the attendance of vulnerable groups;
- iv. monitor the attendance of individual tutor groups, following up with irregular patterns of absenteeism that are not being effectively addressed;
- v. liaise effectively with the Attendance Officer and work together on ensuring that appropriate action is taken in the management of absenteeism and poor punctuality;
- vi. have attendance as a regular item on all tutor team meetings;
- vii. ensure that contact is made with parents/carers of poor attendees, supporting the Tutor/Attendance Officer where appropriate in dealing with parents/carers directly;

8.6 Attendance Officer

8.6.1 The Attendance Officer is responsible for regularly checking attendance data and ensuring that data is accurate and up to date. The Attendance Officer will:

- i. ensure that data is input daily into the attendance management system;
- ii. ensure that parent/carers of absent students are contacted before 10.30am where notification of absence has not been received;
- iii. respond to any parent/carer seeking support on attendance concerns;
- iv. provide regular attendance and punctuality data for relevant staff and external agencies in line with the agreed Academy procedures and timescales;
- v. be responsible for disseminating important attendance information including informing the Assistant Principal which students are of concern, in line with the agreed Academy procedures and timescales;
- vi. be responsible for keeping a record of the interventions in place to encourage attendance and for generating all documentation including letters to parent/carers, in line with the agreed Academy procedures and timescales;
- vii. be responsible for liaising closely with the Warwickshire Attendance Service or Education Welfare Service in Leicestershire to ensure that appropriate levels of intervention take place, referrals are made and attendance meetings are set up;
- viii. be responsible for managing and maintaining attendance records and systems.

8.7 Senior Leadership Team

8.7.1 The Senior Leadership Team will promote good attendance and punctuality and will use opportunities in line management meetings and meeting with parent/carers to remind those concerned of the importance of this. They will:

- i. regularly meet with the link Senior Leadership link and discuss attendance;
- ii. in Leicestershire participate in Attendance Panel meetings with the Education Welfare Officer
- iii. in Warwickshire participate in Pre-Legal meetings with the Warwickshire Attendance Service designated member of staff;
- iv. use attendance data to make links with attendance and academic performance;
- v. take part in celebrating attendance in reward assemblies;
- vi. ensure that reference to attendance is included in all school documentation e.g. Academy newsletters, letters to parents/carers, school prospectus, information for parents'/carers' booklet;
- vii. ensure that relevant INSET is offered to new/existing staff with respect to attendance and punctuality matters.

8.8 Warwickshire Attendance Service, Leicestershire Education Welfare Service

8.8.1 Education Welfare Service are Local Authority services tasked with supporting student attendance. They are able to provide independent advice directly to parents/carers. They also have a role to play in ensuring that students are adequately supported in improving their attendance where required and if necessary instigating legal procedures. Their contact details can be obtained from the Academy or by contacting Leicestershire Local Authority.

8.8.2 Warwickshire Attendance Service is a service commissioned from the Local Authority. Warwickshire Attendance Service representatives have a role to play in ensuring that students are adequately supported in improving their attendance where required. When appropriate the Warwickshire Attendance service will escalate the situation and instigate legal procedures. Their contact details can be obtained from the Academy.

9. Academy Interventions for Managing Persistent Absenteeism

9.1 A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls below 90%. All students whose attendance has fallen to this level or are at risk of reaching this level will be closely monitored through the Academy's tracking procedure, and regular contact made with their parents/carers. Parents/carers will be given opportunities to work with the Academy in improving their child's attendance.

9.2 The Student support manager will regularly analyse student absence and look for patterns of absence and take swift action where there is an attendance concern. Students with issues in school will be followed up immediately. Students whose percentage of attendance falls below 95% will be reviewed by the Student support manager. If appropriate, a school attendance target will be set: parents will be advised by letter. Failure to make an acceptable improvement during the target period or there is an immediate concern further interventions will be considered (see points below).

9.3 If a student's absence is persistent due to ongoing medical reasons, and the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy can request parents provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but will advise parents of their intention.

9.4 Poor Academy attendance can be the result of complex issues faced by a child or family. In such circumstances, a co-ordinated approach by a number of agencies can assist these students and their

families. Where appropriate, the Academy will be involved in referrals and regular meetings with such agencies and in providing support to the student and their family.

- 9.5 In Leicestershire Academies if difficulties relating to absenteeism cannot be resolved through intervention at the Academy level, then the Academy may refer the student to the Education Welfare Service who may request an attendance panel, inviting parents/carers/student to discuss their attendance issues. A legal attendance target may then be set. Failure to achieve this target may result in some cases leading to penalty notices/prosecution.
- 9.6 In Warwickshire Academies if difficulties relating to absenteeism cannot be resolved through intervention at the Academy level, then the Academy may refer the student to the Warwickshire Attendance Service for casework intervention or through to a pre-legal meeting, inviting parents/carers/student to discuss their attendance issues. A legal attendance target may then be set. Failure to achieve this target may result in some cases leading to penalty notices/prosecution.

10. Student Support in Long Term Absenteeism

- 10.1 Each Academy recognises the need to support students during and after long term authorised absence and will:
- i. Endeavour to provide work for students to be completed off-site where appropriate.
 - ii. Consider all strategies in partnership with Warwickshire Attendance Service/Leicestershire Education Welfare Service and other agencies to encourage the return of students to the Academy.
 - iii. Ensure that there is a positive atmosphere within tutor groups and lessons in which students are welcomed back to the Academy.
 - iv. Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in re-entry programmes.

11. Students Arriving Late and Sanctions

- 11.1 Students who arrive late without a satisfactory explanation will receive sanctions in accordance with the Academy's Managing Behaviour Policy.
- 11.2 If a student arrives late due to a medical appointment, evidence must be provided to prevent a sanction.

12. Assessment of Attendance and Rewards

- 12.1 Attendance will be recorded on each student's behaviour report.
- 12.2 Each Academy celebrates good attendance and rewards and recognition will be issued to mark high levels of consistent attendance.

13. Requests for Leave of Absence During Term Time

- 13.1 The Government has issued new regulations which came into force in September 2013 regarding requests for leave of absence during term time (The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations (Amendment) 2013).

- 13.2 Head teachers **shall not grant any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- 13.3 Parents/carers do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- 13.4 The Principal/Designated member of staff will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- 13.5 The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent, i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- 13.6 Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.
- 13.7 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 13.8 Applications for leave of absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a fixed penalty notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- 13.9 All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the relevant local authority.
- 13.10 Warwickshire Attendance Service and Leicestershire Education Welfare Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with their appropriate Penalty Notices Code of Conduct.
- 13.11 If a fixed penalty notice is issued and not paid within the timeframe set out in the notice, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

15. Deletions from the Register

- 15.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the 2016 amendments, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:
 - i. The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
 - ii. The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
 - iii. The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
 - iv. Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
 - v. Death of a pupil
 - vi. Transfer between schools
 - vii. Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
 - viii. Failure to return from an leave of absence after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
 - ix. A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
 - x. In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
 - xi. 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the school and local authority have tried to locate the pupil

- xii. Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- 15.2 All pupils removed from the register will be reported to the relevant LA in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations Amendments 2016.
- 15.3 The Academy will follow Warwickshire Attendance Service and Leicestershire Education Welfare Service Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

16. Academy Attendance Focused Target

- 16.1 The Academy aims to maintain or improve on its overall attendance target of 95%

17. Monitoring and Review

- 17.1 Achievement against Academy attendance targets will be reported upon to each Academy's Raising Achievement Board. The designated Vice Principal will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and procedures and where necessary make recommendations to the Raising Achievement Board for improvement.
- 17.2 The school will keep accurate records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 17.3 The attendance rates will be reported on the Academies website.