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Attendance Policy (Secondary)



Accord

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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<u>Approvals</u>			
Name	Position	Signature	Date
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Document History

Version	Date	Author	Note of Revisions
1	November 2023	S Gibbs	Full re-write of Attendance Policy to reflect DfE changes in guidance for schools. Include Accord Character Virtues linked to pupil behaviours. Graduated response to attendance and truancy. Reference to Managed Placements protocols.

1. Context and Aims of the Policy

The Character Virtues of the Trust underpin the fundamental reasons for our policies and processes. This Attendance Policy should be read in conjunction with the academy's Rewards and Consequences Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Managed Placement protocols. This policy is informed by the DFE guidance for schools and academies and in regard to the statutory guidance documents on parental responsibility measures and children missing in education (CME).



The academy culture of success promotes high standards of behaviours, attendance and engagement. The Trust believes all pupils have the right to the best education possible and in ensuring this, we adopt an inclusive approach for all.

We believe that every day counts in pupil's education. Regular attendance is essential for young people to achieve their maximum potential.

Pupils should attend the academy each day and on time in order to ensure that they have a regular routine to support their learning. This focus also prepares pupils for the world of work, where attendance and punctuality are crucial. We want all pupils to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the academy.

Evidence shows that there is a link between poor attendance and underachievement. We want all

pupils to fulfil their individual potential and in order for this to happen, we need parent /carer co-operation and support in ensuring that we have full attendance and excellent levels of punctuality. This is best achieved by:

- Ensuring effective communication via the pupil planner, the My Child at School App (MCAS) and other sources individual to each academy;
- Ensuring parents / carers read and respect the Home / Academy agreement, in support of the academy's high expectations;
- Involvement in regular events, Parents' Evenings and contact with teachers and staff;
- Working effectively with the academy to support any interventions provided;
- Ensuring pupils attend daily and on time.

All staff across the Trust will work with young people and their families to ensure each pupil attends the academy regularly and punctually, to minimise absence of all kinds. This will be done through:

- Raising awareness of the effects of absence and lateness.
- Ensuring effective systems to monitor absence and to address any underlying barriers that pupils may face.
- Establishing effective systems for incentives and rewards that acknowledges the efforts of young people to improve their attendance and time keeping.
- Securing appropriate levels of challenge where there is a lack of priority given by young people and parents / carers leading to poor levels of attendance and punctuality.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) works as a link between home, the academy, other agencies and the Local Authority, in order to address attendance issues and ensure that all young people are receiving a full-time education. This involves explaining to parents / carers their legal responsibilities referring to other agencies, encouraging families to build good relationships with the academy and helping with academy transfers and admissions. The EWO may conduct home visits, get in contact via telephone or in writing and will work with other agencies such as Social Services and police.

2. Attendance Registering and Absence Procedures

Registration takes place at the beginning of the day and then every lesson. All Trust establishments use national attendance and absence codes to record and monitor attendance. Morning registration closes 30 minutes after the start of the day after which time the pupil will be marked as absent.

Inform the academy on the first day of your child's absence from school, and again on any subsequent days. To safeguard your child, we need parental confirmation for **every day** of absence.

We use an automated absence notification system which uses text messaging and MCAS messaging to advise parents / carers if pupils are absent from the academy without notice.

We send out a message to parents / carers during the course of the morning who can then reply by text message, MCAS message or voice message whichever is appropriate. This 'First Day Response' is done for any pupil expected to be in the academy but has not been marked as present.

This messaging system is NOT an alternative to parents advising the academy that their child will be absent. All parents / carers are still required to inform the academy of pupil absences on the first day by ringing the absence line.

Parents should ensure that they do not take their children out of school on holiday during term time. If this is unavoidable then a "special leave of absence agreement" must be obtained in advance from the school – please see our 'Holidays in Term Time' page on the academy website for full information.

3. Signing In / Out Procedure

For health and safety and safeguarding reasons all pupils who need to leave site during the day need to sign or out through reception. Pupils will need to have a letter from parents / carers, which has also been signed by a member of teaching or pastoral staff, pupils must ensure they sign back in on their return.

If pupils arrive late for school for any reason (even if authorised / pre-agreed) the pupil must be signed in at reception.

We ask that where possible, appointments are arranged outside of school hours but understand that this is not always possible. We will allow pupils to attend appointments but ask that they attend school before or after the appointment. Please notify the attendance team of any upcoming appointments and provide a note or an appointment letter / card to confirm the appointment.

4. Authorised or Unauthorised Absence.

Authorised absence is where the academy has agreed the reason for the absence and approved it. This approval can be in advance or agreed after the absence, where a satisfactory reason has been given and evidenced where appropriate. This authorisation is at the discretion of the Principal, based on the information provided.

Absences that may be authorised:

- Genuine illness or unavoidable medical or dental appointment
- Exceptional family circumstances
- Genuine religious observance
- Suspension
- Involvement in public or significant event approved by the academy.

Absences that may be unauthorised:

- To look after or visit a family member.
- Birthdays, weddings, anniversaries or holidays
- Days out for shopping, events or trips
- Arriving late, after registration has closed.

Absences which have not been appropriately explained or where the reason is not valid, will be treated as unauthorised.

5. Step-Outs, Managed Placements and Directed Learning.

Directing the education of the pupil for a period of time to a partner or local academy, this may include (although this list is not exhaustive):

- 1 or 2 days in a designated area;
- 6 or 12 weeks on an agreed timetable;
- A trial placement for a full transfer.

On these occasions parents / carers will be informed and it is then the parents / carers and pupil's responsibility for the pupil to arrive at the designated academy on time, dressed in full academy uniform, equipped for learning and follow the expectations of the provider of the placement / Step-Out.

Following the successful completion of a period of time out of the academy, parents / carers will be asked to meet with Pastoral Year Leaders on return to the academy to discuss a re-integration.

6. Partial Timetable

As a re-integration tool to enable pupils to return to the academy following absence, a partial timetable may be appropriate. This will be agreed with parents / carers and be time limited to no more than a half-term per agreement in line with Local Authority guidance. This will be reviewed as the partial timetable progresses.

7. Rewards and Consequences for Attendance, Absence and Truancy.

7.1 Praise and Positive Recognition for good and improving attendance.

Good attendance and punctuality are part of the regular discussions between Form Tutors and pupils, and they play a significant role in our Positive Recognition and Attitude to Learning strategies. A full overview of our incentives and positive recognition can be found in our Rewards and Consequences Policy.

We have high expectations, and we support our pupils to meet those expectations; helping young people to develop personal strengths through our character education virtues so their hard work is recognised and that they achieve success. The Trust recognises the importance of rewarding excellent attendance and improved attendance.

Examples of praise and positive recognition for good attendance and punctuality include:

- Positive Trackers
- End of term reward trip or event
- Golden Ticket events
- Ticket Swap
- Positive phone call home
- Above & Beyond MCAS message
- Attendance Champions League prize
- Certificate
- Postcard
- Stamp
- Gold Star
- Queue Jump Pass
- Parental meeting
- Special mention in newsletter
- Praise Breakfast
- Afternoon Tea

7.2 What happens when Character Standards are not met for attendance?

Standard	Reason	Sanction
Character Standard - Defiance or refusal to adhere to character virtues	The 6 Character virtues underpin how we work together as an academy as part of a wider community. These link to socially acceptable expectations and prepare pupils for life beyond the academy.	30 minute Detention (Yellow)
Late – Up to 30 minutes late into the academy or up to 10 minutes late to lesson	Attending the academy and lessons on time demonstrates resilience, ambition, and duty. Being punctual and on time is something that will be expected of pupils beyond the academy, and specifically as they move on to employment.	30 minute Detention (Red)
Late – after 30 minutes late into the academy or over 10 minutes late to lesson	Attending the academy and lessons on time demonstrates resilience, ambition, and duty. Being punctual and on time is something that will be expected of pupils beyond the academy, and specifically as they move on to employment.	60 minute Detention (Red)
Truancy – Where the pupil has deliberately chosen to miss some or all of a lesson.	The academy culture of success promotes high standards of behaviours, attendance and engagement. All pupils have a duty to attend lessons on time.	C5 Consequence
Failure to meet expectations at C4, will result in a C5 sanction in 'Reflections' being logged on Bromcom	Responding positively to warnings and changing behaviour demonstrates co-operation, respect, and responsibility. Refusal to attend the C4 will be challenged.	C5 Consequence

If a pupil arrives late to the academy, that pupil will be given a detention on the next available session at the end of the day. These detentions are recorded electronically and where possible shared with pupils and parents / carers via their planner and / or a MCAS message home.

If a pupil arrives late to the academy (up to 30 minutes) a 30-minute detention is issued

If a pupil arrives late to the academy (after 30 minutes) a 60-minute detention is issued

If a pupil arrives late to lesson (up to 10 minutes) a 30-minute detention is issued

If a pupil arrives late to lesson (after 10 minutes) a 60-minute detention is issued

In all cases, where a 30 or 60 minute detention is set, and the pupil chooses not to attend without prior communication with the academy or demonstrates poor conduct in the detention this will automatically escalate to time in 'Reflections' followed by a 60 minute detention. Detentions are a consequence of not following clearly set out expectations and therefore are not at the discretion of pupils, parents or carers. The academy has clearly set out the expectations placed on pupils, and parents are asked to

support academy policies in this respect, with an understanding that failure to complete a sanction successfully will lead to a further escalation within the consequence system.

Where teachers and leaders notice patterns of persistent poor behaviours in terms of attendance, this is to be brought to the attention of the Pastoral Year Leader and Attendance Team who will then take timely steps to address the repeated behaviours by the pupil.

Attendance and punctuality letters will be sent out to parents / carers when patterns of poor attendance or punctuality occur. This can include warning letters and notifications of action the academy would be required to take if improvements are not made. Each communication with home would escalate where poor punctuality and / or attendance persists.

7.3 Persistent Absence – Fast Track Meetings

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% this would trigger the classification of 'Persistently Absent'. A pattern of attendance approaching or below 90% would trigger an opportunity for parents / carers to meet with the EWO to discuss the matter and look at strategies, and any support that the academy can provide to help improve attendance. Where concerns exist, parents / carers would also be made aware of possible actions if the pupil were to remain 'Persistently Absent'. It is important to note that the academy does take into consideration the fact that there are sometimes genuine reasons for absence such as ill health, family bereavement or other pastoral issues that may lead to attendance approaching or falling below 90%.

7.4 Persistent Absence – Penalty Notice

The academy may take the decision to follow a route of prosecution where there is prolonged 'Persistent Absence'. This process can involve an initial Penalty Notice arising from any of the following circumstances:

- No improvement following a Fast Track review meeting.
- Attendance falls below 90%.
- Inappropriate condoned parental absence.
- Unauthorised or excessive term time holidays.
- Persistent late arrivals to the academy.
- Truancy or failure to attend lessons.
- Being out in a public place or being in sight of the academy while suspended.
- A minimum of 10 academy sessions lost due to unauthorised absence.

The cost of the Penalty Notice is the same per parent / carer, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to a higher amount if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the Local Authority do not receive payment, they may then progress the matter to the Magistrates' Court. The academy does not receive any monies attributed to the penalty notice.

7.5 Persistent Absence - Parental Prosecution

Parents / carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child receives a full-time education. Failure to do so may lead to a Parental Prosecution in the Magistrates Court and the possibility of receiving a Parenting Order or a fine up to £2,500 or a prison sentence for each parent / carer.

Prosecutions at this level would only be sought in exceptional circumstances, where the academy felt that all strategies had been used in seeking to improve attendance and that parents / carers were failing to co-operate.

7.6 Persistent Absence – Education Supervision Order

An Education Supervision Order can be used to work with families and schools, often with the support of external agencies, to secure a return to regular attendance. An application to secure an Education Supervision Order is heard by the Family Proceedings Court where Magistrates have the power to grant the order.

8. Holidays in Term Time

Families who would like to take their child on holiday during term time should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Whilst it may be considered by parents / carers that a holiday will be educational, the pupil will still miss the teaching that they would normally have received during the holiday.

The Department for Education allows a Principal / Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a holiday in term time only in “exceptional circumstances” If you consider that your request for a holiday is exceptional you will need to complete a request form that is available from the academy. Following receipt of the form the circumstances would be given strong consideration with a response provided as soon as possible. If the holiday is not considered to meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances, and the holiday is still taken in term time, the absence would be recorded as unauthorised, and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

All holiday requests must be completed by the parents / carers who reside with the pupil / pupil and submitted to the academy at least 4 weeks prior to the start of the holiday.

As guidance for parents / carers it is important to note that holidays would not be authorised for the following reasons:

- Availability of cheap holidays.
- Availability of the desired accommodation.
- Holidays booked as surprises by family members.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.
- Only time available due to work.
- Holidays would not be authorised under any circumstances during formal examination periods.

Any exceptional request for holiday absence will be considered very carefully.

9. Children Missing in Education (CME)

Should a pupil leave the academy without the parents / carers advising the academy which new school or academy the pupil is moving to, the academy will take action to trace the pupil within 10 working days.

The Trust works closely with Local Authorities and will escalate a concern of CME using the relevant reporting procedures. If families move away from the area or wish to transfer their child to another school or academy, they must inform us. Pupils can not and will not be removed from roll until we

receive notification that the pupil has another school place or where the Local Authority has been unable to trace the child and notify the academy to remove the pupil from roll.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. The Trust has adopted a consistent approach to monitoring attendance to intervene and offer support to pupils and families at the earliest opportunity.

10.1 Parents / Carers Responsibilities

- Ensuring their child attends the academy each day it is open, dressed in full uniform and ready for learning;
- Contacting the academy if their child is unable to attend;
- Providing their most up to date contact details;
- Only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and well in advance;
- Booking any medical appointments around the academy day where possible;
- Proactively engaging with the academy with regards to any support that is offered to improve attendance;

10.2 The Academy Responsibilities

- Establishing and promoting a culture whereby pupils want to attend the academy, helping all stakeholders understand the benefits that good attendance brings;
- Ensuring that the academy has a clear attendance policy, with the attendance policy and procedures applied and monitored constantly;
- Having a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance;
- Promoting that attendance is everyone's responsibility and keeping the concept of academy attendance high profile within the academy community;
- Having robust daily processes to follow up absence;
- Supporting all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, to attend the academy regularly;
- Helping to identify, overcome and remove barriers for good attendance and signpost support where needed. Where there is a lack of engagement and / or where support is not working, work with parents in a more formal capacity, involving the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.

10.3 The Trust Responsibilities

- Ensuring academy leaders and staff receive training on attendance;
- Making certain that academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- Reviewing the Attendance Policy in accordance with its own internal procedures;
- Taking an active role in attendance improvement by monitoring attendance across the Trust, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils and intervening systematically where appropriate;