



# SHIRE OAK ACADEMY

TURNING POTENTIAL INTO EXCELLENCE

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Person Responsible	<b>Mrs Hayley Powell (Assistant Headteacher)</b>
Chair of Governors	Jane Mole
Adopted	September 2015
Revised	September 2023
Next Review Date	September 2024
Signature	

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to Academy attendance through our whole-Academy culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend Academy.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve Academy attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [Academy attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern Academy attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the Academy census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

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

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the Academy
- Monitoring Academy-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

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the Academy
- 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 senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs. Hayley Powell and can be contacted via our switchboard 01543 452518

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The Academy attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to Academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Assistant Headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed penalty notices.

The attendance officer is Mrs Karen Kay and can be contacted via our switchboard 01543 452518

### **3.5 Class teachers and form tutors**

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on SIMs / classcharts.

### **3.6 Academy admin/office staff**

Academy admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the Academy system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the head of year/Attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Contact the Academy to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence via the Studybugs App and each subsequent day of absence.
- Provide the Academy with more than 1 emergency contact name and number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the Academy Day.

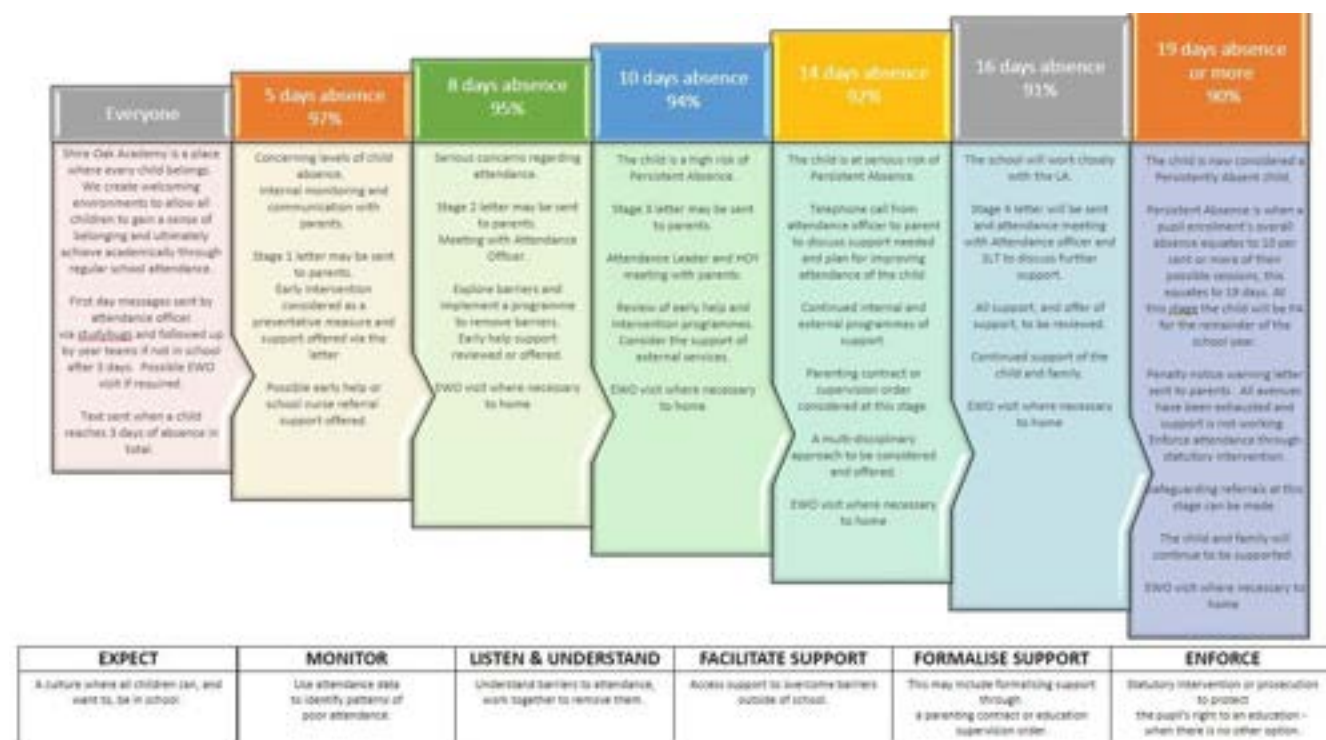
### **3.8 Students**

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time.

### **Attendance Support Map.**

We will always support children during each stage of our Attendance Support Map. If there is lack of engagement, or concerns regarding the reason for absence, we will follow the Attendance Map to ensure we prioritise a child's learning and right to education.



## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 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 the first session of each Academy Day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (see 5.1)

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.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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.

Students must arrive in Academy by 8:30am on each Academy Day and be in form time (or period 1 on Wednesday) by 8:40am.

The register for the first session will be taken during form time at 8:40am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at period 4.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The student's parent/carer must notify the Academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible via the Studybugs app.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the Academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, or the attendance of the child is causing a concern.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy 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. We will not routinely ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the Academy 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.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the Academy in advance of the appointment via the Head of Year with an appointment card.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of Academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of Academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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 Academy can authorise.

## **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The Academy will contact parent's/carer's when punctuality to school is a concern via email, letter or phone calls home.

## **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

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

- Contact the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the parent does not make contact with school following this the Academy will contact the student's emergency contacts. If the Academy cannot reach any of the students' emergency contacts, the Academy may request a visit from the educational welfare officer and/or West Midlands Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.

- Contact the parent/carer each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the Academy will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Where we have on-going concerns regarding your child's attendance, we will visit your home address and write to you. We may even invite you to meet with a member of staff to discuss any on-going concerns regarding attendance. It is important that you talk to us first; you are legally responsible under Education Act 1996 for ensuring that your child is in school every day and on time. If we cannot make contact with you, we will continue to make announced and unannounced home visits, regarding any concerns we may have surrounding attendance at Shire Oak Academy.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The Academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via school reports, school apps and letters home.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the Government amended the England (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Head teachers may only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances' only.

Parents wishing to apply for leave (not medical related) during term time must send a written request for the attention of the Headteacher via the Headteachers PA before making any arrangements. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each leave during term time request will be considered on an individual basis.

Term time family holidays will not be granted as exceptional circumstances and if taken will result in a fine and/or penalty notice issued by Walsall Local Authority.

The Academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. You will receive written notification of whether the leave has been granted or not.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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 Academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. Only 1 day will be granted as authorised leave.
- Traveler students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the Academy, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

#### **5.2 Legal sanctions**

Walsall authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from Academy, where the child is of compulsory Academy 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 requested 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.
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during Academy 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.

### **Prosecution**

Where intervention through the school's process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

Section 4441(a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

*Please refer to section 6 of the DFE Working together to improve school attendance 2022 for more information.*

### **Children at risk of Missing in Education (CME)**

Children Missing Education (CME) are a vulnerable group of children. All agencies who work with children have a duty to support the Local Authority in ensuring all children are safe and looked after appropriately.

**CME** includes those children who are **missing** (family whereabouts unknown) and are children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address **and either**

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown



**It is our responsibility as a school to work with the LA Education and Inclusion team, by making referrals.**

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Shire Oak Academy consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance and has a high target of 96% or more for all students. This is achieved by:

- Setting a consistent rewards programme that takes into account good attendance and improved attendance to enable all students to access the rewards programme.
- Building strong relationships with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working with families to remove them.
- Ensuring accurate data is used to inform all interventions and rewards programmes and that all stakeholders are aware of the parameters to work within.

Shire Oak Academy builds a strong culture around good attendance and ensures that attendance is at the heart of all work carried out within the Academy.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

Shire Oak Academy monitors attendance and punctuality data on a daily basis to identify patterns of concern and students who may need early intervention to ensure the barriers are removed and prevent deterioration of attendance to the Academy. As part of The Mercian Trust access to up-to-date data around is provided to staff to ensure they are able to complete the analysis required around attendance and punctuality.

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the Academy 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 Academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying Academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The Academy will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The Academy 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.

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The Academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors and other Academy 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.

#### **7.4 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 of school. This means that any child will be classed as Persistently Absent when they have missed 38 or more sessions. This equates to 19, or more, missed days during the academic year - which is as little as 6 days over each of the three Terms. This also equates to the equivalent of 1 day of absence, or more, a fortnight across a full school year

We will use a 19-day tracking system to make you aware of the number of days your child has missed in education. This will allow us to work together to reduce the number of days and attempt to prevent your child from reaching this number.

Once a child has reached 38 sessions, or 19 days absence, they will be classified as Persistently Absent from school and we will report this to the Local Authority and follow external legal proceedings.

Weekly attendance meetings will be held between the Attendance Leader and the Attendance Team. Meetings will focus on agreed actions for those children of concern. The purpose of each meeting will be to understand the progress the school is making when supporting identified individuals or groups of children.

The Academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the Academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at Academy.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Utilise the local authority educational welfare officer to make home visits where needed as well as other Academy staff.
- Parents will be informed where attendance is a concern via letters at different levels of interventions and attendance concerns, complete home visits, request parents attend attendance clinic meetings and engage external agencies that can support the family with interventions and removal of barriers to attending school.

#### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Mrs Hayley Powell - Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

#### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Pupil Premium Statement

#### **Appendix 1: attendance codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on Academy attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the Academy
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the Academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the Academy
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Academy has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations

<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveler absence	Student from a traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the Academy
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the Academy
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	Academy is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at Academy after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in Academy	Student of non-compulsory Academy age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the Academy
<b>#</b>	Planned Academy closure	Whole or partial Academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day