L.E.A.D. Academy Trust
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Rainbow Forge Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

Review frequency: Annual

Approval: October 2020

1. Aims

Our academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to attendance by:

Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory academy age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

It is our intention to ensure that every child enjoys coming to our academy. By providing a stimulating, challenging and secure environment, the children will be encouraged to be regular attendees, which will ultimately enhance their learning.

Absences must be kept to a minimum and will be authorised in line with Government Guidelines/DfE 'Academy Attendance' July 2019. Continuity of learning can only take place through regular attendance.

Regular appraisal and monitoring of registers will highlight any issues which may be followed up by written and/or verbal communication with the parents/carer's.

Good habits are developed from an early age. It is vital that punctuality is the norm, rather than the exception. It is our policy to encourage and demonstrate the importance of efficient time keeping for all pupils and this will be communicated through regular contact with parents/carer's.

Our academy recognises and adheres to Sheffield City Council Children and Families, Penalty notices for Truancy, Excluded Pupils, Persistent Lateness, Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time Local Code of Conduct (see Appendix One) and the latest DfE guidelines.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Academy procedures

3.1 Registration times:

Registration time begins at 8:50 am and closes at 9am. Registers will be kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes but not kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

3.2. Registration:

- Only authorised people may complete registers and they must be taken at the same time twice a day.
- Electronic registers are used in every class as part of the School's Information Management System (SIMS).
- If the electronic register is unable to be taken, then the office administrator will provide a paper register and will then input it on the electronic register from the office.

3.3 Taking a pupil off roll

A pupil's name will not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been deleted from the admissions register and a removal / leaver form completed.
A pupil of compulsory school age shall have his/her name deleted from the admissions register when:

- The pupil is registered at our academy in accordance with the requirements of an academy attendance order and another academy is substituted by the Council for that named in the order, or the order is revoked.
- The pupil has been registered at another school or academy. (Academys can register travellers' children even if they are on the roll of another school/academy. The academy the child normally attends is the base academy; the other registration is temporary).
- The academy has received written notification from the parent that they are educating the pupil themselves. (Elective Home Education)
- The pupil has ceased to attend our academy and no longer lives within a reasonable distance of academy.
- In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding 10 days for the purpose of a holiday, the pupil has failed to attend the academy within the 10 school days immediately following the last day of absence which was granted and we are not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness or any unavoidable case. Both the academy and the Council will make reasonable enquiries to find out where the pupil is, to include letters, home visits and telephone calls.
- The pupil is certified by the Academy Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- The pupil has been continuously absent from our academy for a period of not less than 20 school days and both the academy and EWO have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate him/her. Again, reasonable enquiries should be made. In such cases we will ensure the EWO

are informed and procedures concerning missing children and missing children protocol should be followed.

- The pupil had died.
- The pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before our academy next meets and their parent has indicated that they intend to cease to attend. (All registered pupils are required to remain at our academy until the leaving date- the last Friday in June. At school includes, for these purposes, approved educational activities undertaken off site, including work experience)
- The pupil has been permanently excluded and the exclusion has been upheld by governors.
- The pupil has been admitted to the academy to receive nursery education and has not on completing such education transferred to a reception class at our academy.
- The pupil attends a special school and the Council gives consent for his/her name to be removed.

If we are told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school/academy, staff at our academy will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school/academy and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation will then be sought from the receiving school/academy. Whenever a pupil leaves us a Common Transfer File (CTF) will be completed. If we are concerned about any aspect of a transfer or a pupil has "disappeared" the matter should be referred immediately to the Education Welfare Service who will investigate missing pupils as part of Sheffield Missing Children's protocol.

3.3. How do we monitor attendance?

- All pupils' attendance is monitored daily and every week using data analysis from the electronic register.
- Our academy operates a 'traffic light' system when monitoring attendance:
    - **the green zone:** pupils with 96% and above, may require little or no action regarding their attendance;
    - **the amber zone**: pupils with between 95% - 91% attendance, these pupils' attendance is carefully monitored by the academy, letters are sent to parents to tell them that their child's attendance has dropped into the amber zone. Absences after a child's attendance has dropped to 90% or below will not be authorised in line with Government guidelines.
    - **the red zone**: pupils with below 90% attendance with no satisfactory reason, may be referred to Education Welfare, who will consider instigating Legal Action. They will be informed by letter that this is to happen.
- Statistical evidence for the whole academy and for individual classes is analysed every week and shared with staff.

3.4. Reasons for absence and procedures for following up absence:

- Only the Headteacher can authorise absences.
- If letters/notes come from parents/carer's directly to the class teacher, then these should be signed and dated by the teacher and sent to the office.
- If a teacher receives verbal communication then it must be recorded on the electronic register for the appropriate days, otherwise the office administrator must be informed so that it can be recorded from the office.

- All information about absences and logs of the academy's attempts to make contact with home is recorded electronically on SIMS and in pupil absence records.
- Unexplained absences are followed up as early as possible on the morning of the absence by a text message, phone call, email or home visit.
- If there has been no communication on the first day of absence the Attendance Officer is informed to follow up the absence.
- If a child has not returned to the academy for two days and there has been no contact, then the Attendance Officer will visit the home.
- If after this period of time, no contact has been made and we are concerned about the safety and whereabouts of a child then the police and / or social care may be informed.
- If after a week still no reason for the absence has been ascertained then a letter is sent home as a final attempt to gain a reason.
- If there has been no satisfactory reason for a child's absence, it will remain unauthorised on the academy register.
- If a child is absent and no contact has been successful by academy or the Family Liaison Worker, the child may be referred to Social Care in line with the academy's safeguarding and child protection policy.
- If a child is missing for ten school days then s/he will be referred as a missing child to Education Welfare.
- If a child does not return to the academy for a further ten days (twenty school days in total) and there has been no contact from the parents, then his/her place may be removed from the register. Only if there are no safeguarding concerns.
- Pupils' attendance is monitored and tracked against an, 'attendance tracking system' which clearly sets out the tiers for escalating procedures for poor/persistent absentees including prosecution.

3.5. Holidays / Leave of Absence

- DfE guidelines Education Act 2003 (updated July 2019) the Headteacher may no longer authorise holidays / leave of absence during term time.
- If a family is affected by extremely difficult circumstances, then the Headteacher may reserve the right to authorise a 'leave of absence'. **It should be understood that a 'leave of absence' will only be authorised for five days in the most testing and difficult circumstances.** Authorisation in these circumstances will be requested in writing prior to booking flights or the organisation of any other arrangements, to avoid difficulties or financial loss.
- Where families are known to have taken children out of the academy during term time without prior agreement proceedings will commence for Penalty Notices to be issued. These are issued per child/per adult (subject to change)
- Due to the Year 6 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs), we cannot condone any absence during the SATs week in May. Children who are knowingly taken from the academy to go on holiday during SATs will be referred to Education Welfare for Penalty Notices to be issued.

3.6. Lateness:

- Children arriving late within the registration period should report to the classroom.

- Children arriving after registration period should report to the main reception giving the reason for lateness, this information and the time of arrival is noted on SIMS. Lateness is reviewed weekly and parents are contacted.
- Unauthorised and persistent lateness may result in a referral to Education Welfare. A Penalty Notice may be issued (See section 11).

3.7 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment can be counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of academy for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents are asked to inform the office prior to the appointment and show evidence eg letter or appointment card.

3.8 Religious Observance

Sheffield is a vibrant and diverse city that promotes respect for the faiths and values of its communities. There are many religions celebrated in our academies and it is important that we recognise the diversity of the population.

In Sheffield one day for each religious festival (no more than three days in one academic year) can be counted as authorised absence. Where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

4. Legal Action

4.1 Legal sanctions

Academies can fine, or refer to education welfare, parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from the academy, where the child is of compulsory academy age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay the amount within 21 days or the cost will double by 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to refer to the LA, who may issue a penalty notice, ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for attendance and truancy. This may take into account:

- A 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 pupil 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

Traveller pupils 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 academy but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5. Children Missing Education

Where a pupil has not returned to our academy for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from the academy without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the academy and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the academy does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

- We will always make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child, jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name form the register.
- We will adhere to the Children Missing in Education Statutory Guidance for LAs;

  www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/children_missing_education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

6. Children Who Cannot Attend Academy Because of Health Needs

In line with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority (LA) have a duty to: "make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them."

This applies to children and young people:

- who are of statutory academy age and who
- are permanently resident in the LA and
- who are not in academy for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative due to ill health and
- where the health need and necessity for absence has been validated as necessary by a medical doctor
- will not receive a suitable full-time education unless the local authority makes arrangements for this

Health problems include physical illnesses, injuries and clinically defined mental health problems. Suitable medical evidence will be required. This would include details of the health problem, how long the condition is expected to last and the likely outcome, and a treatment plan. This must be provided by a suitable medical professional, normally a hospital consultant. However, where specific medical evidence is not available quickly, the local authority will liaise with other medical professionals (e.g. the child's GP), so that provision of education is not delayed.

Arrangements for alternative provision will be made as soon as it is known that a child has not attended the academy for 15 days for health reasons or as soon as it is clear that a health-related absence from the academy will be 15 days or longer, verified by a medical doctor. The 15 days may be consecutive or cumulative. The provision will commence as quickly as possible. There may be circumstances in which suitable alternative education is already in place e.g. if the academy has made arrangements for a pupil or the child is receiving education at a hospital academy.

7. Children in Public Care

Nina Sneddon is the coordinator who liaise with the LA Children Looked After Team. The Virtual Academy will be contacted each day whether the pupil is attending or is absent.

Attendance will also be reported as part of the PEP.

8. Elective Home Education

A parent has a right to educate their child at home and can request to home educate their child at any point. On receipt of written notification from the parent/carer we will inform the LA and once approval has been received then the pupil may be taken off roll and a leavers form completed.

9. Strategies for promoting attendance

To encourage 100% attendance Rainbow Forge will:

Whole school breakfast - Each morning all the children in school are offered a free healthy breakfast. This encourages the children to come to school (and on time) and creates a positive, nurturing environment in the classroom whilst ensuring the children are well fed and ready to learn.

Full House - Each class has a full house poster that they proudly display on their classroom door if all the children attend that day. They then reveal a letter in a hangman phrase on their IWB eg good attendance, or all here. When they complete the phrase, the children get an agreed small treat such as 5 minutes extra playtime. Parents are informed of this through the class story on Class Dojo.

Surprise Day - On random unannounced days everybody who is at school on that day will receive a treat such as extra playtime, a movie afternoon etc.

Attendance Postcards - These are sent out to families to praise good attendance each term. They can be received for 100% attendance or improved attendance.

Teacher call - When children are absent from school, the class teacher calls at the end of the day to ask how the child is and discuss their return to school and how they can catch up on missed work. When this is effective it reduces absence to one day.

Family support - We work closely with families to ensure they are supported when facing challenging circumstances. Please book an appointment with Mrs Sneddon if you have concerns about your child's attendance or punctuality.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 The governing body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

10.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the academy, and for monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

10.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

Monitors attendance data at the academy and individual pupil level

Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Advises the headteacher when to refer pupils to education welfare who may consider prosecution

10.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the academy office.

10.5 Office / reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the academy system.

10.6 Parents/Carer's

Parents whose children are registered at academy are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at academy

Parents should:

- Ensure that their child arrives at academy on time, in academy uniform and ready to learn.
- Instill in their child an appreciation of the importance of attending academy every day.
- Impress upon their child the need to observe the academys code of conduct
- Work in partnership with academy to resolve issues which may lead to academy non-attendance.
- Ensure that they are aware of the academy's attendance policy
- Notify the academy if he/she is absent. This should be done as soon as possible – preferably on the morning of the first day of absence. They should also supply an explanation for the absence.
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during academy hours

- Not book holidays during term time.

11. Communication with parents / carer's

- Parents / carer's are regularly informed about attendance issues in the head teacher's newsletters.
- Parents / carer's are rung/ text/ emailed or visited on the morning of their child's absence.
- Letters are sent enquiring about absence and lateness, impressing the legal requirements for children to attend and the financial penalties that may be served for non-attendance.
- Every term parents/carer's of pupils whose attendance is below 95% are sent letters to inform them that their child's attendance has fallen into the amber zone or red zone.
- An education welfare specialist is consulted if the attendance of a child drops below 90% or if there is unauthorised absences. Families causing concern are also supported by the academy in resolving attendance issues.
- The academy will attempt to work with parents at all stages to address attendance issues and make reasonable efforts to support parents/carer's in getting their child to the academy.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher / SLT. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

13. Links with other policies

This policy links to our child protection and safeguarding policy, Equality Policy