



Attendance Policy

(reviewed and ratified by the Full Governing Body on 16th October 2018)

Review Cycle: 2 Years –Autumn Term

Review By: Leadership Team, Behaviour & Attendance
Sub-Committee

Contents:

Policy Aim, Principles, Procedures, Strategies for
improving Attendance, Process for dealing with
attendance problem

AIMS AND PURPOSE

Alcester Academy recognises that:

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their children attend the school where they are on roll.

Alcester Academy believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

The academy values all students and we will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and SEND.

ALCESTER ACADEMY EXPECTS:

All students will:

- Arrive by 8.45 am, appropriately prepared for the day, and register during the morning Tutor Period.
- Attend the academy on each day that the academy is open, and for the whole day, until 3.25 pm.
- Inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that affects their attendance at the academy.

All our students' parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend every day unless they are too ill to attend.
- Ensure their children arrive on time, prepared and equipped for the day.
- Inform the academy on 01789 762285 (option 1) by 9.00 am on the day, if their child is going to be absent.
- Communicate with the academy about their children's progress and attend meetings such as Parents' Evenings and attendance contract meetings when required.

Alcester Academy will:

- Provide students with appropriate education.
- Respond to concerns raised by both students and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner.
- Follow the procedures of the academy in dealing with attendance issues.

Attendance Target:

Alcester Academy aims to achieve attendance of 96%.

PROCEDURES

Clarity about who does what and when is important as this avoids confusion. Monitoring attendance performance throughout the school will be monitored in a number of ways:

- Registration in every lesson.
- 3 weekly attendance reports
- Individual students' attendance will be included in reports to parents.

Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the academy and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

- Illness: Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Head to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students must attend school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school.
- Other Authorised Circumstances: This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement.
- Excluded: (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Registration:

The register provides the daily record of attendance of all students. It contributes to a student's end of term reports, record of achievement and references. It is a legal document that may be required in a court of law as evidence, for example in prosecutions for non-attendance.

Alcester Academy uses SIMS electronic registration system. The main codes used are those laid down by the DfE. The full list of codes is available upon request.

The academy day begins at 8.45 am for students. The registration time in the morning is at 8.50 am. Registration will take place during the morning Tutor Period. Where a student arrives after the start of registration, he/she will be marked as late. Students late after 9.10 am will be coded as U which constitutes legally as an unauthorised absence.

Registration in the afternoon is taken at 12:35 during Period 4

Registers are also taken in every lesson using SIMS. Lesson registration enables patterns of internal truancy to be identified which may suggest problems with a particular subject or a wider issue. Students will be spoken to about any such issues and parents informed if this does not resolve the matter.

Follow up on absent students:

Only the Headteacher or designated member of the Senior Leadership Team can authorise absence, on the basis of information provided by parents/carers. Where explanations are not felt to be acceptable, the absence will remain unauthorised and the parents/carers informed.

If students are absent without their parents/carers' knowledge, this is a cause for concern as they may be putting themselves at risk in a number of ways. Communication between home and the academy is vital in helping to protect them. For this reason we ask that:

In all cases of absence, parents/carers must contact academy by 9.00 am on the day to allow the academy to record the absence and if appropriate authorise it. Parents/carers should give an indication of the probable length of absence if likely to be longer than one day. If the explanation for absence is not accepted as justifiable, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the parents/carers informed.

Where there has been no contact from parents/carers and the child remains absent without explanation, academy staff will make contact with parents/carers of students to ask the reason for absence. In the first instance contact will be by text/email or telephone, but where parents/carers cannot be contacted, this will be followed up in writing. For this reason parents/carers must inform the academy immediately if their contact details change.

If a student is missing from academy for some days and parents/carers cannot be contacted, or no satisfactory contact has been received, then the academy will refer them to the Child Missing in Education Service who will visit the home address and carry out the Warwickshire County Council Missing Students Procedure.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT IMPROVED ATTENDANCE

Incentives:

- Students with 96% attendance for the Year will be invited to attend a rewards trip (subject to satisfactory behaviour and academic achievement). The Headteacher reserves the right to lower the attendance required to attend the trip in the interest of ensuring the trip is full and cost effective. This will always be done to allow students with the best attendance to be invited first.
- Students with a diagnosed medical condition that requires regular hospitalisation may be set a lower attendance target of 90% in order to attend the rewards trip. All such cases will be in consultation between the Headteacher and Assistant Head with responsibility for attendance.
- 100% attendance will be celebrated termly and at the end of the year.
- Any student who has taken an unauthorised holiday during term time will not be allowed to participate in the trip.

Support in school:

The academy believes firmly in working in partnership with parents to resolve issues. Parents/carers and students must contact the academy if they are experiencing problems with attendance. This should be to the Learning Support Unit (LSU), tutor or a member of the Leadership Team.

Links to other policies:

In all cases where attendance is a problem, consideration will be given to whether any aspect of one of our other policies such as anti-bullying, behaviour or special needs should be implemented to help support improved attendance, for example, whether the student has an unrecognised special educational need that adds to their reluctance to attend.

Reintegration

We all realise that returning to school following a period of absence can be very difficult for some young people, whatever the reason for their absence. In these situations academy staff will plan carefully with parents/carers and student, together with any relevant agencies about how best to support the student's return to school.

In some cases, for a short period, it may be appropriate to start the reintegration gradually, building up to a full-time timetable. The academy will make the decision as to whether a 'phased return' is appropriate. Other support will also be considered, from mentors through to appropriate rewards for improvement and achievement.

Punctuality

The academy operates a 'late gate'. Students will receive sanctions for lateness ranging from break time detentions through to SLT detentions depending upon the frequency of the lateness.

PROCESS OF DEALING WITH ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS

Tutors discuss attendance during registrations and through mentoring and seek reasons for absence and lateness.

If there are concerns that attendance is dropping or is close to falling below the academy expectations, a letter will be sent to inform parents/carers of our concerns and the current attendance of the child. This may be done before a student's absence reaches 95%. It is hoped that parents/carers can then take steps to deal with the absence/lateness and ensure that they carry out their legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance.

Where there is cause for concern, parents/carers will be contacted and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns. This can be done at any point that a student's attendance causes concern. An attendance target will be set over a period of time at this meeting to encourage improvement.

Continuing concerns will lead to parents/carers being invited to attend an attendance panel that may include governor and Senior Leadership Team representation, to discuss any problems relating to lateness/absences which are affecting the student's ability to benefit from the education offered. At the meeting, parents/carers and student, together with school and any outside agency staff present, will draw up a contract which sets out the improvement needed and how this is going to be achieved, with actions allocated to specific people with time limits. A review date will be set and a further meeting held if appropriate.

Should parents/carers fail to attend the meeting, or when a contract is broken and/or attendance fails to improve, or at any point where it is deemed appropriate, regardless of whether parents have attended meetings, the academy will refer the case to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement officer (WAS).

For further details about penalties and other legal action please consult <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>.

Referral criteria for intervention from the Education Social Work Service

Students whose attendance falls below 95% will be monitored by WAS (Warwickshire Attendance Service) as well as the academy, students will be seen in school and visits to parents/carers will be made where appropriate.

Students whose attendance falls below 90%, and where much of the absence is unauthorised, will be referred for action by the WAS officer in consultation with the Attendance Officer

Missing students will be referred to the WAS officer once academy staff have tried and failed to contact parents/carers.

Requests for leave of absence in term time:

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents 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.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

- 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.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so 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.
- 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.
- Application forms are available on the academy website. Applications for leave of absence for a school pupil during term time should be submitted to the Headteacher a minimum of 3 weeks before the requested leave date
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Signed: _____

Chair of Governors
Mr M Dean

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Headteacher
Mr P Hyde

Date: _____