



## Policy Documents Control Sheet

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## Policy Validity Statement

This policy is due for review by the date shown above, after which it may become invalid. Policy users should ensure that they are consulting the currently valid version of the document.



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## 1. Policy Statement

The Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial.

The attendance and punctuality of students is a priority within the Academy, with a view to encouraging high attendance rates and avoiding levels of persistent or intermittent absenteeism.

All measures and strategies will be employed to ensure maximum attendance for all students. The Academy will promote a high level of attendance for all students by providing a stimulating, caring and happy working environment.

The Academy will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance, the Academy will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

### General Responsibilities

The **Academy Council** will establish a policy and procedure for attendance and monitor its effects in order to focus its attention and where necessary its efforts, on the total level of absence amongst all its students. The Academy Council will set an overall absence target for the following academic year by 31 December of each year and this should be in line with government expectations.

The **Principal** will:

- Ensure that the Academy continues to focus attention and effort on reducing absence amongst all students and as a minimum, achieve government expectations of attendance;
- Ensure an overall absence target is set for the following academic year by 31 December of each year, taking into account the performance of the best schools with similar cohorts.
- Expect students to attend the Academy regularly, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn;
- Encourage punctuality and a positive attitude towards attendance;
- Communicate with parents/carers as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality;
- Explain the importance of attendance and punctuality throughout the curriculum;
- Set a good example and promote good attendance and punctuality;
- Closely monitor absences in order to keep unauthorised absences to a minimum;
- Support students in all aspects of Academy life;
- Include in yearly and other reports to parents/carers on their child's achievement, attendance and level of punctuality;
- Work promptly in partnership with parents/carers and students to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible;
- Liaise with the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Officer (PEIO) as necessary;
- Establish clear procedures for recording absence to comply with the "**School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities**" (*Updated September 2018*).

It is the responsibility of **all staff** to familiarise themselves and comply with this policy and procedure in accordance with relevant professional standards. Staff will:

- Expect students to attend the Academy regularly, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn;
- Encourage punctuality and a positive attitude towards attendance;
- Communicate with parents/carers as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality of their child;
- Explain the importance of attendance and punctuality throughout the curriculum;
- Set a good example and promote good attendance and punctuality;
- Effectively monitor and promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness and where appropriate use an established system of sanctions, administered by tutors and Pastoral Support Officers (PSOs)
- Closely monitor absences in order to keep unauthorised absences to a minimum;
- Support students in all aspects of Academy life;
- Include in-yearly and other reports to parents/carers on their child's achievement, attendance and level of punctuality;
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and their child to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible;
- Liaise with the PEIO as necessary;
- Establish clear procedures for recording absence to comply with the "**School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities**" (**Updated September 2018**).
- Execute the academy procedures and protocols for attendance management to the best of their abilities.

## The Students

- Should attend the Academy regularly and on time;
- Should attend all lessons punctually, properly equipped and ready to learn;
- Can expect to be welcomed by tutor and teachers and receive assistance by subject teachers following periods of absence in order to catch up;
- Will be listened to and respected;
- Will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the Academy.
- Will ensure that that they follow and adhere to the established and identified procedures for registration and code of conduct regarding attendance.
- Will have respect for teachers and the needs of fellow students during their educational experience.

## Parents/Carers

- Are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends the Academy, properly dressed, equipped and ready to learn;
- Are responsible for immediately informing the Academy of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence (and each subsequent day of absence thereafter.) Reasons for absence must be confirmed in writing on return to the Academy. Considerations are given to procedures where parents/carers have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language;
- Are expected to work actively with Academy staff, the Attendance Team of PSOs and Chapter Leaders and PEI (Pupil Entitlement Investigation) Team to solve attendance problems where these exist or develop;
- Do not have a right to take students on holiday in term time; leave of absence must be granted in advance by the Academy; any application will be considered against the student's attendance record, family circumstances and timing with regard to assessments and examinations. Parents/carers may apply for term time holiday in exceptional circumstances by using the proforma on the website (See Appendix)
- Can expect the Academy to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

### 3. Procedures

#### The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording students' attendance or absence and in the latter case, if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents/carers for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a student.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of seven years following completion at the end of the academic year.

#### Staff Responsible for Processes

The Principal or designated member of staff is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance or punctuality concerns.

The Principal or designated member of staff will meet regularly with the PEI Team to discuss any attendance or punctuality concerns.

The Principal or designated member of staff will report termly to the nominated member of the Academy Council who will in turn report to the full Academy Council on attendance issues.

The Academy will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and that they receive in-service training on registration regulations and Education Law.

#### Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

- The current DfE Guidance for schools on Attendance ("**School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities**") (**Updated September 2018**) states that parents/carers may not authorise absence, only schools can do this.

Absence for the following reasons could be authorised where parents/carers have confirmed the absence in writing on their child's return to the Academy. Consideration will be given to procedures where parents/carers have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language.

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- If permission for absence has been granted by the Principal
- Transport arranged by the council has failed to arrive where the student lives beyond statutory walking distance.

All other instances of absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## Holidays during Term Time

- The current DfE Guidance for schools on Attendance “**School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities**” (Updated September 2018) states that parents/carers may not take their children out of school for a holiday during term time.
- Holidays during term time may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Parents/carers may apply to have holidays during term time approved as authorised absence by completing a “request for term time holiday” form which can be downloaded from the school website.
- All decisions to authorise holidays during term time are the responsibility of the Principal and the decision is final.
- Parents/carers that take their children on a term time holiday without authorisation that is longer than four days may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) from the PEI team.

It may be necessary for the Academy or PEIO to ask the parent/carer to provide the Academy with written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- Appointment cards/letters
- Medical certificate
- Letter from GP
- Medical evidence such as a prescription
- A print-out or photo/screenshot of a “confirmation of patient consultation”

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the Academy or the PEI Team may ask for the parents/carers’ permission to contact the student’s GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the student from attending the Academy and to establish a possible return date for the student.

## Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

Should a student be absent for ten school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a ten school-week period, this includes any absence marked in the register as unauthorised, the details will be forwarded to the PEI Team, who will issue an FPN.

An FPN is a fine that is issued per parent, per child, rather than bringing a case before a court. The FPN is issued with an invoice for £120 and 28 days are given for settlement of the Penalty. If the FPN is paid within the first 21 days the amount payable is reduced to £60.

Some examples of unauthorised absences for which an FPN may be issued are:

- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- A holiday in term time which has not been authorised by the Principal. The government has directed Principals may only grant leave for such a holiday in exceptional circumstances.

However, there are some occasions when they are issued outside of these criteria. For more information about Fixed Penalty Notices, please visit the West Sussex County Council website.

## Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

A daily working routine will be established within tutor groups, the PSO team, across the Chapters, within lessons and at lunchtimes to ensure that high standards of attendance are encouraged. This routine will be consistently reinforced by pastoral, academic and educational support staff.

Students should be encouraged to enjoy Academy life by participating in extra-curricular activities, benefiting from an established system of rewards, taking advantage of staff support and advice and experiencing the wide range of opportunities open to them.

Students are not permitted to leave the Academy site at lunchtimes. The Academy provides a high standard of canteen facilities and a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

The Academy pastoral staff will administer random checks on punctuality, with a view to avoiding complacency in students.

Expectations are made clear to parents/carers with regard to attendance and punctuality through an initial induction meeting, further parents/carers' evenings, a booklet for new parents/carers and students, and contact with the Chapter Leaders, PSOs or PEI. The Home Academy Agreement and Academy Prospectus also explain expectations with regard to attendance.

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents/carers' evenings and student reports will be used.

Parents/carers, students and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Parents/carers will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Students who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into the Academy through a structured and individually tailored programme.

All issues which may cause a student to experience difficulties which may impact upon attendance are to be promptly investigated by the Academy.

Chapter Leaders will meet with their Chapter Heads regularly to identify and support those students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Pastoral leaders will request "panel meetings" with parents of students with poor punctuality or if they are at risk of becoming persistently absent to discuss ways of supporting students and families to improve attendance and punctuality.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Chapter Heads will report to the Principal or designated member of staff as appropriate.

The Principal will report to the Academy Council on any relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.

The Academy Council will review the policy every 2 years.

# APPENDIX

## EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME



### NOTICE TO PARENTS /CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive during your holiday. Attendance is vital to academic success and missed education poses a potential risk of under achievement. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

The Department for Education no longer allows Head teachers/Principals to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you consider that your request for absence is exceptional you will need to complete the form shown overleaf. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If leave is not authorised and you nevertheless withdraw your child from school the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

**In the case of an unauthorised absence, the Pupil Entitlement Department at West Sussex County Council will be notified and a Penalty Notice may be issued. Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60, which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. Thereafter if the Penalty remains unpaid after 28 days, this may result in legal action being taken against you.**

**Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Please refer to West Sussex County Council website if you would like further clarification relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice process, or if you wish to see their Code of Conduct.**

All requests must be completed on the form overleaf; letters will not be accepted. This should be returned to the Attendance Officer as soon as possible prior to the absence.

I hope you will support our efforts in raising attendance and attainment at the Sir Robert Woodard Academy.

Yours faithfully

**Eber Kington**  
Assistant Principal

**EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE REQUEST FOR ABSENCE  
DURING TERM TIME  
APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER**



If you consider you have to take a holiday in term time, please complete this form and return to the Attendance Officer at least 14 days before the date you wish to remove your child from the Academy.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

First day of absence \_\_\_\_\_ Date of return to school: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of days missed \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for absence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised The Education Welfare Services will be notified of the absence and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent/carers of each child taken out of school and that this fine is £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action being taken against me. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so, is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.*

Signed ..... Date .....

***(This should be returned to the Attendance Officer as soon as possible prior to the absence)***

.....

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor Group: \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTHORISED:** Your request has been authorised for the following dates:  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**UNAUTHORISED:** Your request for a leave of absence has not been authorised.

Signed ..... Principal Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

*An unauthorised absence may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent/carers of each child taken out of school, the fine is £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.*