

**Ormiston Academies Trust Attendance And Punctuality Policy**

**Introduction**

The Ormiston Academy Trust seeks to ensure that all their students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential.

The academy will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the academy community feels wanted and secure.

All academy staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends academy regularly and punctually.

The academy will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives the academy will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

**Aims**

- To improve the overall attendance percentage of students at academy.
  - To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the academy including students, parents, teachers, non teaching staff and governors.
  - To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
  - To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
  - To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
  - To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and academy.
  - To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
  - To promote effective partnerships with other services and agencies.
  - To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
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## **AIM NO 1**

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### **To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at the Academy**

- Apply Whole Academy Attendance Policy consistently.
- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- Relate attendance issues directly to the academy's values, ethos and curriculum.
- Monitor progress in attendance measurable outcomes.

## **AIM No 2**

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### **To Make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for All Those Associated with the Academy, including staff, students, parents and Governors.**

- Produce termly/annual reports to parents/governors.
- Hold induction Year 7 evening for parents/students.
- Produce newsletters.
- Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff.
- Display materials at focal points – form rooms etc.
- Discuss attendance issues in all relevant staff meetings (e.g. attendance review meetings).
- Introduce award systems, including badges, trophies, certificates, chocolates, end of year prizes, etc.

## **AIM NO 3**

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### **To Develop a Framework Which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Designated Tasks**

- Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
- Make phone/letter contact, using designated academy staff, on first day of absence.
- Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
- Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both students and parents).
- Appoint an Attendance Co-ordinator with appropriate time set aside.
- Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the academy staffing structure.
- Timetable staff to work with other outside professionals.
- Have clear procedures prior to referral to Education Social Workers.
- Review attendance regularly.
- Be familiar with the Education Social Workers' referral and recording system.

#### **AIM NO 4**

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##### **To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and students.**

Highlight attendance in:

- PSE
  - Assemblies
  - 'Bully line'
  - Staff available to talk to students
  - Academy counsellor
  - 'Mentors' system
  - Making use of available resources
  - Homework clubs
  - Breakfast clubs
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- Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
  - Seek improved communication with parents e.g. when parents ring in.
  - Produce 'problem page' for students in Year 7.
  - Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
  - Involve parents from earliest stage.

#### **AIM NO 5**

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##### **To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data**

- Fully utilise the advantages of computerised registration.
- Standardise recording of:
  - authorised/unauthorised absence (and to have decided after two weeks)
  - educational activity
  - presence
- Analyse data according to gender, ethnicity, special need, and age.
- Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
- Decide what information, if any, is provided for:
  - governors
  - pastoral staff
  - other academy staff
  - parents

- students (individual or groups)
  - education social work service
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- Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

#### **AIM NO 6**

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##### **To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication between Home and Academy**

- Initiate first day absence contact.
- Make full use of computer generated letters.
- Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.
- Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships (see Aim 2).
- Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).
- Encourage all parents into academy.

#### **AIM NO 7**

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##### **To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions**

- Identify finance for a system of rewards.
- Actively promote attendance and associated reward and effective sanctions.
- Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
- Involve students in system evaluation.
- Make use of imaginative and immediate sanctions.
- Take action which accords with objectives agreed between academy and others, e.g. Education Social Worker, parent.

#### **AIM NO 8**

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##### **To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and With Other Services and Agencies**

- Designated key staff for liaison with Education Social Work Service and other agencies.
- Give priority to timetabled meetings with Education Social Work Service.
- Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.

- Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Social Work Service.
- Hold termly attendance review with key academy staff and Education Social Work Service.
- Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.
- Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community e.g. community police contact officer.
- Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the academy.
- Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

## **AIM NO 9**

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### **To Recognise the Needs of the Individual student When Planning Reintegration Following Significant Periods of Absence**

- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning student.
- Involve/inform all staff in/or reintegration process.
- Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
- Consider peer support and mentoring.
- Involve parents as far as possible.
- Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
- Include Education Social Workers, parents and student in reintegration plan.

### **Responsibilities of the Governing Body.**

- Approve the policy and any proposed changes.
- Receive reports from the Principals
- Review the working of the policy in the light of the Principals' reports.
- Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the academy and is known to parents.

### **Responsibilities of the Principal.**

- Set attendance targets as part of the development plan and target setting process.
- Monitor progress.
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the academy.
- Determine in collaboration with other senior staff whether to authorise any proposed absences requested i.e. for family holidays or any absences that have already taken place which were not requested.

- Notify parents as appropriate that failure to attend regularly by a student of compulsory age could lead to legal prosecution of the parents.
- Initiate through appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance.
- Make an annual report to Governors.

### **Responsibilities of Senior Pastoral Staff.**

- Oversee the attendance arrangements and ensure they are working efficiently.
- Make periodic checks of the registers to monitor student absence.
- Make regular checks of absence notes and ensure staff follow up unaccounted for absences.
- Arrange appropriate training for staff and deal with issues of inadequate registering.
- Advise the Principals on further improvements and progress towards set targets.

### **Responsibilities of Form Tutors.**

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Ensure that students produce absence authorisation notes.
- Follow up cases of unauthorised absence.
- Keep senior staff advised of suspected truancy.
- Advise senior staff of any underlying problems that may account for absence.

### **Responsibilities of Classroom Staff**

- Keep a register of attendance of students to lessons.
- Take action if internal truancy is suspected i.e. contact Head of Year/duty senior member of staff.
- Inform Head of Year/Pastoral Manager of persistent absences.

### **Responsibilities of Students**

- Attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Inform the academy on the first day of absence.
- Supply an explanatory letter on the day of return.
- Discuss with the tutor any planned absences well in advance i.e. family holiday
- Make a request for leave of absence following the academy guidelines.

### **Appendix Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

- When a student of compulsory age is absent from academy the register must record when this absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Authorised absence includes illness authorised by the parent.

- Students may also be marked absent on an approved educational activity which is defined as:
  - One taking place off the academy premises.
  - Approved by a person authorised by the Principal or Governing Body.
  - Supervised by a person approved by the Principal or Governing Body.
  - Of an educational nature e.g. field trips, work experience.
  - Link courses where students attend another academy or F.E. college part time.
  - Students receiving part of their education at home e.g. because of illness
  - Approved sporting activity.

### **Leave of Absence**

- Leave can be granted but only by the Principals on recommendation from a senior pastoral member of staff.
- Parents are expected to request leave of absence in good time using the academy request form.
- The Principals may not give leave automatically but will take into account:
  - The age of the child
  - The time of year proposed.
  - The nature of the holiday.
  - Parental wishes.
  - The views of the Head of Year.

In those cases where leave is not authorised, and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will count as unauthorised and prosecution can result.

### **Short Term Leave**

- The Principals can legally grant short term leave for family reasons and it is up to the Principals to decide reasonableness i.e. bereavement.
- Where a student becomes pregnant leave will be granted for 18 weeks after the birth. After that time any further absence would be unauthorised.
- Dental and hospital appointments constitute authorised absence although the academy would urge parents to make appointments where possible outside academy hours.

**There is no legislation or DCSF guidance on absence for religious observance. The Principal will review applications reasonably and in consultation**

### **Categories of Absence**

## **1. Illness**

The Education Act of 1996 provides that no offence is committed, if a pupil is prevented from attending academy by illness. If the academy is satisfied with the reason offered, then the absence must be treated as authorised. Alternatively, if there is doubt regarding the validity of the explanation following contact with the parents, then the academy will treat the absence as unauthorised. If a pupil feels unwell or has an accident, he/she must tell a teacher straight away. Normally, he/she will be sent to Student Reception where if he/she is too ill to remain in academy, Head of Year or Senior Management Team permission is required before parents can be contacted. If hospital treatment is necessary then parents will be contacted to make suitable arrangements.

***Pupils are not allowed to leave the academy premises or sign out at any time without permission from Head of Year or Senior Management Team.***

## **Medicines**

If a pupil needs to take medicine at academy, he/she should bring a letter from his/her parents stating when it needs to be taken. All medicines must be clearly marked with the pupil's name and left at Student Reception. The only exception is if a pupil has an inhaler for asthma. The academy is not allowed to provide aspirin, paracetamol, or other form of tablets.

## **Signing Out**

It is best to make medical appointments outside academy hours. If a pupil has to leave the academy during the day for any reason then a signed note from parents is required in advance of the date.

Before leaving the premises, all pupils must sign out at Student Reception. Their note should be signed and dated by student receptionist and remain with the pupil as authorisation to be off site. If a pupil returns to the academy later on the same day, then he/she must sign in again.

## **2. Minding the House/looking after children**

This lies with the discretion of the academy. However, in the vast majority of cases such absences will be treated as unauthorised. Only in exceptional circumstances such as serious illness and where there is no other adult available should the absence be authorised. Urgent contact should be made with the EWO to investigate the situation and perhaps involve Social Services.

## **3. Shopping during academy hours**

Such absences will be unauthorised. Only in extremely exceptional circumstances, where investigation proved there to be no alternative, will absences be authorised.

#### **4. Special Occasions**

Only in exceptional circumstances should these be authorised. A birthday would not be such an example and would be unauthorised, whereas the graduation of a brother or sister should be treated as an authorised absence. In considering the individual case tutors must have regard to the nature of the event, its frequency, whether advance notification was given and the overall attendance pattern of the pupil.

#### **5. Family Bereavement**

Such situations will be treated sensitively, absences will be authorised to attend a funeral within the family or very close friend.

#### **6. Family Holidays**

No parent can demand leave of absence for purposes of a holiday as a right. The academy will exercise its discretionary power to grant leave of absence for annual holiday or extended trip during term time. Only in very exceptional circumstances should the amount of leave exceed 10 academy days in any academy year. The academy will actively discourage holidays in academy time as they tend to disrupt a pupil's education. In all cases parents must give prior notice by completing a holiday request form. If they fail to do this the absence will be unauthorised.

Exceptional circumstances mean that a parent must make out a case for taking the child away from academy for more than 10 academy days. This will be considered by the Governing Body, who may delegate this responsibility to the Head Teacher. In all cases the Head Teacher and/or Head of Year will explore with parents why such a leave of absence is necessary. Holidays abroad to visit family members are likely to be the most common of these requests. Since the distance involved makes a nonsense of the 10 academy day rule we would generally grant an extended leave of absence, while stressing to the parent the impact on a pupil's education and the need to choose an appropriate time which will minimise this effect.

If leave of absence is agreed for a specific period, then any excess will be treated as unauthorised. This will also apply when parents fail to gain permission in advance. It must be made clear to parents that where holidays exceed one month consideration will be given to striking the pupil from the academy's roll.

#### **7. Days of Religious Observance**

Absence for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs is to be treated as authorised (pupil counted present).

## **8. Traveller Children**

The academy will authorise the absence of Traveller Children when we are satisfied that a family migrates but gives reasonable indications that it has every intention of returning.

## **9. Interviews**

Where a pupil attends an interview with either a prospective employer or in connection with an application for a place in further or higher education, the academy will authorise the absence upon proof of the appointment (pupil counted present).

## **10. Work Experience**

Where a pupil is engaged on an approved scheme, the absence will be authorised by the academy (pupil counted present).

## **11. Off Site Activities**

Where these are academy directed (e.g. educational visits, sporting activities) they will constitute an authorised absence. In the case of activities peculiar to an individual (e.g. music exams, special tuition), the academy will exercise its discretion to authorise the absence (pupil counted present).

## **12. Pupils at Off Site Units**

Absence of pupils who on a temporary basis are receiving education at units other than at academy will be marked authorised as educated off site. Into this category will fall:

- Hospital tuition
- Pupil Referral Units
- Home tuition
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(Pupil counted present)

## **13. Excluded Pupils**

Where a pupil has been temporarily excluded for a fixed period or indefinitely their absence will be treated as authorised. In the case of a permanent exclusion absence will also be treated as authorised while a review is in progress.

## **14. Study Leave**

Study leave will constitute as an authorised absence (pupil counted present).

### **Court Proceedings**

These will be very much a last resort but the academy will look to the EWO and LEA for support in bringing parents of poor attenders before the courts. It must be made clear to parents and pupils that non-attendance will not be tolerated and all must see that appropriate action is taken. Court action can only be brought on unauthorised absence using evidence from the previous six months. No previous history may be used. It is important that form tutors and Heads of Year follow the agreed procedure for investigation of absence and they must bear the burden of decision as to when an absence is unauthorised.