

BERWICK ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2018

Berwick Academy seeks to ensure that all students receive an education which maximises opportunities and enables them to realise their true potential.

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

We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide and, therefore, from regular attendance.

The aim of our attendance policy is to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students.

All staff will work with students and their families to support parents/carers in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their child/children attends the Academy regularly and on time.

The Academy has established 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/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

This policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with the DFE 'School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' (November 2016) and 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' (January 2015).

Aims

- To maintain high standards of attendance of students registered at the Academy
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the Academy including students, parents/carers, staff, 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/carers and students;
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data;
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and the Academy;
- To promote effective partnerships with the Educational Welfare Service and with other services and agencies;
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence;
- To reduce the number of students who have more than 3% overall absence;
- To reduce the number of persistent absentees, that is those whose attendance falls below 90%

Attendance and attainment

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and attainment of our students is inextricably linked. Regular attendance at the Academy is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the Academy is dedicated to ensuring the attendance policy is adhered to.

Every student will be placed into an attendance monitoring group linked to their projected attainment.

Step 1 Green Group:	Expected attendance	(97% - 100% attendance)
Step 2 Yellow Group:	Risk of underachievement	(94% - 96.9% attendance)
Step 3 Amber Group:	High Risk of under-achievement	(between 90 - 93.9% attendance)
Step 4 Pink Group:	Severe risk of under-achievement	(80-% - 90% persistent absence)
Step 5 Red Group:	Extreme risk of under-achievement	(Below 80% persistent absence)

At the start of each academic year the Academy will review the attendance of students in the previous academic year (this would include the attendance of students in Year 8, for those who join the academy in Year 9 and of students who join from other schools at any time). Students with a history of lower than expected attendance in the previous academic year will be placed onto the step they were on in the previous academic year if their attendance is below the expected level i.e. below 97%.

Promoting Regular Attendance

To ensure that parents/carers are aware of the Academy's attendance procedures and their parental responsibility for their child's attendance and punctuality the Academy will:

- Give information on attendance and punctuality on the Academy's website
- Involve parents/carers from the earliest stage of poor attendance
- Ensure that the attendance assistant contacts parents on the first day of absence if contact has not been made by parents/carers.

To ensure that students are aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality the Academy will:

- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality;
- Relate attendance issues directly to the Academy's values, ethos, and curriculum;
- Reward good attendance

The Law

The responsibilities of parents to ensure school attendance are covered by the 1996 Education Act.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Reluctance to attend

If a student is reluctant to attend, or if on the same day of the week a student claims to be ill it is never wise for a parent to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. Parents should contact their child's form tutor or head of year to discuss any issues specifically affecting their child's attendance.

Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from the Academy must be classified as either authorised or unauthorised by the Headteacher or staff acting on behalf of the Headteacher. It is not the responsibility of parents to classify an absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the Academy for a good reason such as illness or medical appointments which unavoidably fall in school time.

Unauthorised absences are those which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the LA using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Absence codes are entered in line with statutory guidance.

Absence Procedures

If a child is ill or is absent for any reason, parents/carers should, on the first day of and further absence, phone the attendance assistant giving a reason for the child's absence.

Should a parent/carer not contact the Academy, the Attendance Assistant will contact parents/carers to confirm that the child is not in the Academy and to confirm the reason for the absence.

Doctor and dentist appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to the Academy following the appointment they should return.

Parents must provide an explanatory note for all absences.

If a child's absence continues then parents/carers are requested to notify the Academy daily.

If a phone call is not received, then the Attendance Assistant will contact parents/carers to verify the absence.

If the Academy receives no reason for any absence, then an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence (holiday) taken during term time).

Sending home ill during the Academy day

If students feel unwell during the day, a first aider will be contacted to assess their condition. Where a student has a known medical condition, parents will always be called in the first instance. However, if the student is presenting with merely a headache, sore throat, or other minor ailments, they will be encouraged to stay in school after a period of monitoring by first aid trained staff. If, after monitoring by the first aid staff it is deemed that student is too ill to remain in school the parent/carer will be contacted so that they can collect the student for medical advice/treatment.

Attendance Below 97%

When a student's attendance falls below 97% the Academy will:

- Contact parents
- Enter the student's name on a database and monitor their attendance on a weekly basis;
- The Head of Year and Form Tutor will act as key workers for students where attendance is a cause for concern;

The Head of Year and Assistant Headteacher will meet weekly with Attendance Assistant to discuss students whose attendance falls below 97%.

Assistant Headteacher and Head of Year will consider a range of strategies to address the poor attendance of students in this category, including;

- attendance meetings with both parents/carers and student to agree strategies to improve attendance
- home visits
- telephone calls and letters are also strategies that will be used.

When necessary, referrals will be made to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Academy may also request that a parent/carer provides the Academy with supporting medical evidence to verify prolonged or frequent absences, and will refuse to authorise absences unless this proof is provided.

If parents/carers and/or students need help with attendance, you can contact the appropriate Head of Year.

If attendance continues to be a concern you will be asked to attend a meeting in the Academy to talk about the problems and to put a plan in place. Sometimes, the Academy may need to involve other services to help; referrals will be made to outside agencies if the Academy feels such action is warranted, including an Early Help Assessment.

The Academy will always try to communicate with you regarding your child's attendance if it declines. This communication may involve explaining that attendance is a cause for concern by letter, making telephone calls to you, and inviting you to attend a meeting in the Academy depending on the circumstances. The Academy will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve the situation.

Enforcement Action/Formal Attendance Procedures

If, following the Academy's attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or parents/carers have not co-operated with attempts to improve the situation the Academy are required to consider referring the matter to the LA for enforcement action.

The Education Act has confirmed that the Headteacher authorises absences. If your child misses school a lot because of illness, or if the Academy do not know of any serious health issue that would mean your child could miss school frequently, the Academy will ask you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences. We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they receive the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Rewarding Good Attendance

Rewards – Attendance	Responsible	Points	Additional Information
1 week full attendance	Form Tutor	10	Recorded in planner
½ term 100% attendance	Head of Year	50	Certificate + draw entry
1 term full attendance	Head of Year	n/a	Certificate, badge* and invite to reward trip *[1 term green, 2 terms blue]
100% academic year attendance	Head of Year	250	Certificate + voucher. Green & blue badges exchanged for 100% attendance badge – can be worn for remainder of school career.

In addition there is a tutor group prize for the tutor group with the highest attendance.

Attendance over 97% is a pre-requisite for attendance at the Year 11 prom.

Punctuality

All students arriving late will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the Academy's attendance data base (SIMs).

Registration takes place at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. Morning registration begins at 8.55am.

Students arriving after 9.00 am will be marked L (late before register closed). Morning registers will be closed at 9.25 am.

All students who arrive after 9.25 am will be marked using the U code, unless a satisfactory reason is given.

If no explanation is provided the morning session will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration takes place at 1.10pm. Students arriving after 1.15pm will be marked L (late before register closed). PM registers close at 1.40pm.

Students arriving after the registers are closed will be marked with a U code, unless a satisfactory reason is given. If no explanation is provided the morning session will be recorded as an unauthorised absence

The Heads of Year will monitor the late book and letters will be sent to the student's parents/carers to inform them of their child's level of lateness.

Failure to Attend Registration/Lateness at the Academy

Where a student is repeatedly late for registration, or fails to attend registration on a regular basis, the tutor should pass the student's name on to the Head of Year.

From that point onwards the Head of Year will employ a range of sanctions to ensure that the student attends registration on time.

Sanctions will include detentions, parental contact, internal exclusions, in the worst cases, a fixed term exclusion.

A letter will be sent home from the Academy to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Head of Year will be offered to discuss ways that the Academy can offer support in finding a way to improve this.

Incentives to improve punctuality may also be offered to pupils e.g. through the Academy's rewards system.

If there is no improvement, then a referral may be made to the Educational Welfare officer to consider if enforcement action is required.

Lateness to Lessons

A class register is taken at the beginning of each lesson. Those students who are repeatedly late to lessons will be identified by the Head of Year using the late list printout.

Once this is done, sanctions will be used to address the problem. These sanctions will include: parental contact, detentions and, in the worst cases, internal exclusions.

Lateness to Assembly

On assembly days students are expected to be in the main hall by 9.05am.

After a student has been late three times for assembly without good reason, a letter is sent to the student's parent/carer.

If the student is late again, he/she will be given an after school detention.

After three detentions the student will receive a one day internal exclusion each time he/she misses an assembly owing to lateness.

Truancy from Lessons and/or the Academy

The first time a student is caught truanting from the Academy and/or lessons, the parent/carer of the student will be contacted by letter, and the student will be given a one day internal exclusion, followed by a two week period on attendance report.

The student's name will be placed on the truancy register and regular spot checks will be carried out to make sure the student is in lessons.

The second time a student is found truanting, he/she will be given a two day internal exclusion and parents/carers will again be informed. After coming out of the BRIDGE, the student will be placed on attendance report for a period of four weeks. Regular spot checks will take place to make sure the student is in lessons.

The third time a student is found to be truanting, the student's parent/carer will be contacted and invited to attend a meeting with a senior member of staff. The student will be given a four day internal exclusion. After coming out of the BRIDGE, the student will be placed on report for a period of approximately one school term.

Leaving the Classroom without Permission

Any student leaving a classroom without permission will be given a one hour that will take place at the end of the academy day.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

The law states that parents/carers do not have the right to take a student out of the Academy for holidays during term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Headteachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Academy will consider each request of absence individually; considering the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the student's prior attendance and any key events taking place in the Academy at that time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made at least 4 weeks in advance in writing using the Academy's Leave of Absence application form.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from the Academy. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected to return to the academy including possible consequences if the student fails to return on that date. All replies will be signed and dated by the Headteacher.

Where a leave of absence is not granted the reason for not authorising the request will be clearly stated explaining why exceptional circumstances have not been met, in addition to the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal to authorise the absence. i.e. a request to the Educational Welfare Service to issue a Penalty notice.

As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances. The Headteacher can request the Educational Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice; the parent will be informed in writing that a request to the Educational Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice is being made.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Student Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the Academy can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 days of unauthorised absence.

It is vital that if you keep the Academy informed of any change of details and regularly update them if details change.

Your child may be at risk of losing their place at the Academy if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the Academy is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

Roles

Form tutors

Tutors receive the Attendance Tracker by email at the beginning of each week from the Attendance Assistant.

- The tutor reviews their group and notes students with improved or declining attendance.
- The tutor conducts a return to from absence interview with students.
- Tutors share the weekly Attendance Tracker information with their group and reviews progress against the tutor group attendance target.
- Tutors ensure students record their weekly attendance in their Planner.
- The tutor praises students with improved attendance and rewards in line with policy.
- The tutor speaks to each student with declining attendance quietly in order to establish concerns and to promote improvement.

If attendance continues falls below 97%:

- Telephone call home to discuss the concerns with the parent / carer.
- Discussion with the HOY if the telephone call home raises concerns.
- A similar process should occur where there are concerns about punctuality.

Heads of Year

- Promote the importance of attendance in assemblies
- Reward good attendance
- Assist in arranging rewards trips for attendance
- Ensure that tutors are carrying out appropriate Step 1 and Step 2 procedures
- Monitor the sharing of attendance information within tutor groups
- Contact parents/other agencies of students who have been missing from education
- Oversee the transition of students between attendance steps
- Meet with the EWO to discuss actions to be taken with students on Steps 4 & 5
- Lead Attendance Improvement Plan meetings
- Assist the Attendance Panel and EWO meetings

Support Staff - Attendance Officer

- Produce list of absentees and follow up absent pupils
- Maintain the school register
- Issue letters as required
- Produce reports as required
- Provide information to form tutors, Heads of Year, SMT, EWO, Governors and other agencies

Leadership Team

- Assistant Headteacher – develop and monitor strategies to improve the attendance of persistent absentees and other students where attendance is a concern
- Assist the Headteacher in responding to Leave of Absence requests
- Promote the importance of good attendance
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy
- Evaluate the impact of the policy in improving attendance, in particular for vulnerable groups.
- Review the policy and update periodically to reflect legislative changes and best practice.

