



**HARPFIELD  
PRIMARY  
ACADEMY**  
*Creative  
Education  
Trust*

# HARPFIELD PRIMARY ACADEMY

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

REVIEWED: October 2016

SIGNED AND APPROVED BY:

DATE : 18/10/16

# Student Attendance Policy

## 1. Principles

- 1.1. All students should be at the Academy on time every day that the Academy is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. There is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement and so for students to achieve well they need to attend the Academy regularly. We aim for a 95% attendance rate across the school.
- 1.2. The attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of students. The Academy has a duty in law to refer any absence of ten days or more to the Education Welfare Service ('EWS') where the Academy either has been unable to make contact with the parent / carer / student or has general concerns about absence. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of all staff working in partnership with parents / carers, students and outside agencies. Excellent attendance by students will be recognised by the awarding of certificates in assemblies.
- 1.3. The Academy is required by law to take an attendance register twice a day, and by using the approved attendance codes this will show whether the student is present or engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent. Every half-day absence from the Academy has to be classified by the Academy as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the Academy can make the decision about what absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents or carers cannot do so. Accurate information about the reason for absence must be collected so that the correct decision can be made.
- 1.4. **Unauthorised Absence** occurs when the Academy does not consider the absence to be reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:
  - parent/carers keeping students away from the Academy unnecessarily;
  - truancy for all or part of the Academy day;
  - absences where the Academy has not yet received an acceptable explanation;
  - students who arrive at Academy too late – more than 30 minutes after the close of registration - to get an attendance mark;
  - any other circumstance where the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher has not given authorisation;
  - holiday taken in term time that has not been authorised by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- 1.5. Students may be reluctant to attend school for some reason. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved by working with the parent/carers and the student. If a student is reluctant to attend, parents / carers should never cover up absence by being pressurised into making excuses for the absence. If the parent / carer knowingly condones absence from the Academy, without good reason, they will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996.
- 1.6. The Academy is always willing to support parent / carers whose children are experiencing difficulties that may result in non-attendance. Parents / carers should contact the Academy at an early stage so that we can work together to resolve any problems. Working in partnership nearly always brings success. Where difficulties cannot be resolved by the parent / carer or the Academy, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer ('EWO') who will work with parents / carers and the Academy to resolve the problem.
- 1.7. In extreme cases, when all measures to improve the student's attendance have failed, the EWO can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parent / carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the student. The

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maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or three months' imprisonment.

## 2. Procedures related to attendance and lateness

- 2.1. The Academy applies the following procedures to promote excellent attendance:
  - a) Parents/carers will be informed annually via the Academy newsletter and website about the Academy Attendance Policy.
  - b) Students who achieve excellent attendance will be recognised and congratulated in praise assemblies.
- 2.2. The Academy will ensure that they ascertain the correct reason for absence by communicating with parents in order to decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Initially, when a student is absent from Academy, parent/carers should contact the Academy before 9.30 am. Parent/carers are able to leave a message on the answerphone before 8.00 am. If no notification has been received by 10.00 am, the Academy will make first day contact. Where contact cannot be made by telephone, a letter will be sent to the home for parents to confirm the reason of the absence.
- 2.3. Where the Home School Link Worker has concerns that non-attendance is adversely affecting student progress s/he will consult with the Class Teacher and make initial contact with the parents/carers. The EWO will be kept informed of all students giving cause for concern related to non-attendance and agreement will be made regarding which students will be followed up by the EWO.
- 2.4. An attendance surgery may be called at any stage to review the situation; to offer support; or to consider further action. Recognition should also be given where attendance has improved. Following investigation any unresolved issues may result in the parent/carer receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996.
- 2.5. When an individual student's attendance falls below 85%, without good reason, the case will be investigated and the parents asked to attend a meeting. This meeting may also consider issues of punctuality and behaviour which may be having a detrimental effect on attendance.
- 2.6. Parent/carers who are subject to a Penalty Notice have three choices:
  - a) pay the £50 fine within 28 days;
  - b) pay £100 after 28 days but within 42 days;
  - c) not pay the fine. In this case, the Notice will be withdrawn and Magistrates Court proceedings will start. This may result in a range of fines of up to £2,500.
- 2.6. Parent/carers should avoid taking family holidays during term time. Holiday leave will be recorded as an absence which is either authorised or unauthorised by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- 2.7. Any requests for annual family holiday leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher allowing a minimum of 14 days notice. Parents may then be called to a meeting in school to explain the reasons behind the request. Each individual request will be evaluated taking into account the reasons for the request, together with the information detailed in 2.8).

Requests for holidays during Key Stages 1 and 2 will not normally be authorised.

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- 2.8. When deciding whether to authorise absences, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will take into consideration:
- a) past attendance record;
  - b) the time of year and the potential negative impact on student learning (particularly in the summer term during SATs);
  - c) the impact of the absence on the teachers' workload;
  - d) the negative impact of missing the start of the Autumn term; and
  - e) the Key Stage.
- 2.9. It is not appropriate for the Academy to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc.
- 2.10. Leave may be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher for authorised absence other than for holidays.
- 2.11. Request for Authorised Absence other than for a holiday should be submitted on the 'Application for student leave of absence from the Academy other than for parental / carer holiday' form (Appendix 1):
- a) parents should complete the form giving at least ten days' notice to the Academy;
  - b) the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will consider every application on its own merit and either authorise or reject the application according to the guidance given for attendance by the Department of Education;
  - c) consideration will be given to requests for absence to participate in activities that will broaden the student's experiences;
  - d) in some situations the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will be able to assign an attendance code which means the student will not be marked absent; for example for a recognised sporting activity.
- 2.12. Students who arrive late for school and miss registration must sign in at Reception.
- 2.13. Where necessary, parents/carers will be made aware of absence/ late concerns via a letter and be given the support and opportunity to resolve the problem.
- 2.14. Lateness occurs 30 minutes after the registers close and will be counted as an unauthorised absence unless a very good reason for the lateness is confirmed by the parent/carers, or a member of staff.
- 2.16. Those responsible for attendance matters in the Academy are:
- Policy and Procedures: Business Manager
  - First Day Contact: Home School Link
  - Educational Welfare Officer

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### All Staff

- Mark registers accurately and on time.
- Pass on to Reception staff promptly all communications from parent/carers regarding planned or past absences.
- Monitor attendance patterns and refer to the Home School Link Worker where there are causes for concern.
- Record all notifications of reasons for absence.

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## Administration Staff

- Monitor completion of registers.
- Make first day contact with parent/carers to establish reasons for absence and alert parents/carers to cases of absence without their knowledge.
- Record all notifications of reasons for absence.

## Class Teachers and Home School Link Worker

- Celebrate excellent attendance.
- Liaise with the EWO about any student whose attendance is giving cause for concern.
- Monitor attendance of the Year Group.
- Identify poor attenders and contact parents/carers and take appropriate action.
- Offer help and support to parents/carers and students in the first instance.
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer and share information over causes for concern (i.e. irregular attendance or continuous absence of over two weeks).

## Educational Welfare Officer

- Monitor attendance.
- Make contact with parent/carers where there are causes for concern.
- Record contact made in relation to cases.
- Provide support to families.
- Confirm in writing future requirements regarding attendance and medical notes.
- Provide feedback to the Academy – i.e. results of initial investigation and an expectation of future EWO input.
- Inform Academy of referral made to other agencies from the EWS.
- Issue fixed penalty notices or initiate Court proceedings.
- Hold attendance surgery where appropriate.

## Leadership Group

- Make decisions whether or not to authorise family holiday requests.
- Make decision whether or not to authorise other requests for absence.
- Attend Attendance Surgery meetings.
- Monitor patterns of attendance by Year Group.
- Report on attendance patterns to the Local Governing Body.

## Local Governing Body

- Review attendance patterns and agree action plans with the Headteacher where attendance levels fall below the target for the year.

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Appendix 1

## Application for Student Leave of Absence from the Academy for Other than Annual Holiday

Full Name of Child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Application: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dates Leave Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parents/ Carers: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Office Use Only*

Current Attendance percentage: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorised: Yes/No

Activity is an approved alternative educational activity? Yes/No

Attendance code: \_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_