



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed and updated: **October 2018**

Owner: **Attendance Officer**

Next Review Due: **October 2020**

INTRODUCTION

Wymondham High Academy puts students at the heart of the learning process to provide a safe and secure learning environment. The Academy aims to work together with parents and students in order to ensure the achievement of high levels at attendance and punctuality. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for every student as high achievement is inextricably linked to good attendance. Our mantra is: Attend, Learn, Achieve.

Aim

To raise achievement and enhance progress by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and engagement with school.

This Attendance Policy should serve as:

- A statement of intent
- A guide to practice
- A measure of effectiveness
- A means of accountability

Objectives

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance and punctuality
- To inform parents and students of attendance and punctuality issues
- To ensure students and their parents in key categories are aware of the implications of poor attendance and potential PA (Persistent Absent) status
- To identify causes of non-attendance and take appropriate action.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the Academy in order to raise progress and ensure that safeguarding is a priority in the school.

Ofsted places a high priority on excellent attendance and school figures are compared to national figures as part of the judgement on behaviour, personal development and welfare.

The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend

regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act.

The Academy's Guiding Principals

- Emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Seeks to ensure that all its students access a full-time education, which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- Will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Will work with students and their families to ensure every student attends regularly and punctually.
- Will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Has an effective and efficient system of communication with parents together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- Will continue to develop ICT based attendance recording and tracking systems in order to provide accurate information, an effective analysis of attendance trends and implementation of suitable intervention strategies to improve individual and overall attendance.

Academy, Student and Parent Responsibilities

Academy

- Expects students to attend school regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn.
- Encourages good attendance and will investigate unexplained and unjustified absenteeism.
- Staff at both North and South Gates to greet students arriving late and issue lunchtime detention sanction.
- All staff are responsible for confirming with the Attendance Office details of students in meetings, events, trips etc which prevent them from attending Form or lessons.
- Should a student experience any difficulties in terms of attendance or punctuality, the Academy will work with the family to overcome these where possible.
- A Parentmail message will be sent to parents (indicated as priority 1) on the first day of absence unless a call has been made by 9.00am to the Attendance Office.

Students

- Ensure they attend school regularly and on time.
- Attend all lessons punctually.
- Dress in the correct uniform and have the required equipment for the day.

Parents

- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

- Phone the Attendance Office on the first morning of any absence (this should be confirmed in writing when their child returns to school).
- Families should not take any holiday during term time. Students have 13 weeks holiday a year. (See Appendix 1)
- If a student is prevented from attending or is late, families are asked to notify the Attendance Office by 9.00am on the first day of absence or lateness (contact with the Attendance Office is required each day of a student's illness).
- A student's absence will be considered unauthorised until a reason is provided and considered by the Academy.
- Families should not make routine medical / dental appointments during school hours and must bring in evidence of the appointment should this appointment be unavoidable.
- Parents can access attendance information via logging into Go4Schools.

Registration Procedure

Registers will be taken punctually each day at 8.35am and 1.55pm (1.15pm on Tuesdays). Form time takes place between 8.35am and 8.55am on each day except for Tuesdays. Should a student arrive in school and the register has been taken, he/she should sign in at the Attendance Office providing an explanation for lateness. If a student arrives after 9.10am, formal closure of AM legal registration, this will incur an unauthorised U code, Late After Registration Closed. The Academy has a professional expectation that all teaching staff take an electronic register for each AM, PM Registration and Lessons.

Student Absence

All students will have individual records of attendance / punctuality as taken from the official register. A register is a formal, legal document and taken by staff every lesson.

Approved DFE symbols are used to indicate the nature of absence.

Registers close at 9.10am, should a student arrive after that time, such lateness will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

If a student is absent without notification by 9.00am, then a Parentmail message will be sent to parents requesting a reason for absence. Parents are required to contact the Attendance Office on each day of absence unless medical supporting evidence to indicate longer term absence. It is the Academy's decision as to whether or not it will authorise absence.

Absence from school **may be authorised** if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness / illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of Religious Observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement

Absence from school **may not be authorised** for the following reasons:

- No explanation is given by the family.
- Parents have not contacted the Attendance Office on each day of absence.
- The Academy is dissatisfied with the explanation.

- The student goes on holiday without permission having been granted by the Academy.
- Attendance is below 90% and medical supporting evidence has not been provided.

Absence from school **will not be authorised** for:

- Shopping
- Slept late
- Staying at home to look after siblings or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays, family celebrations
- Holidays (unless the Academy accepts there are exceptional extenuating circumstances)

Authorised absence is recorded in line with DfE guidance.

Should a student arrive late they must register directly with Attendance Office.

Students who arrive late regularly or without any reasonable explanation will attend a lunchtime detention

If a student shows a trend of arriving late, the Attendance Office will notify parents. Lack of punctuality is damaging to learning and must be eliminated. Support work will focus on elimination of reason for lateness, will engage both student and family.

All students are monitored by their Form Tutor. Any absence trends will be shared with the Attendance Office. The Attendance Office will work with parents and students to ensure better and more consistent attendance. Supportive meetings can be offered.

Fast Track Proceedings and Fixed Penalty Notices can be used to encourage improved attendance and punctuality.

Procedures for following up absence

If notification from parents has not been received, a daily Parentmail message will be sent. In the case of non-response to this message, the Attendance Office will attempt to make contact via; personal telephone calls and emails. Letters may also be sent.

Persistent Absentees

Students are monitored on a daily basis and a range of intervention strategies are employed when attendance falls below 93%, this includes: letters, phone calls and emails. Fixed Penalty Notices, Attendance Support Plans or Fast Track Proceedings if improvement is not made.

Fast Track Attendance Framework

In cases where attendance fails to improve, and Fast Track Proceedings commence, parents will be given up to 6 weeks to ensure their son or daughter attends the Academy regularly. Parents could face prosecution or be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (Appendix 2). The 6 week framework will make parental responsibilities clear whilst at the same time offering

parents and student the support of the Academy. The Attendance Officer works cohesively with the Norfolk County Council Attendance Support and Enforcement Officer (ASEO).

- The Academy makes a referral to the Attendance Support and Enforcement Officer (ASEO)
- Parents are invited to an Initial Fast Track Panel meeting at the Academy at which an Action Plan will be agreed.
- The student's attendance will be closely monitored and progress on the Action Plan reviewed at a Fast Track Review meeting.
- If there has not been sufficient improvement in the student's attendance at the Academy, the Local Education Authority may instigate legal proceedings or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Long-Term Absence

There are sometimes genuine cases where students return after a prolonged illness. The Academy will ensure that:

- The Academy will do its best to support the student and parents in maintaining access to education.
- A member of the Attendance Office team will meet with the family to plan the re-integration. A personalised package will be considered as part of the reintegration process.
- Relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- The Academy will work with the family and other agencies to facilitate a successful outcome.
- For longer term absence, a referral to the Medical Needs Team may be made following receipt of a letter from the consultant stating that the student is medically unfit to attend school. The Academy is unable to make a referral until a suitable letter has been received from the appropriate medical professional.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

It is the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum meets their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of the students and the Academy.

- Parents are welcome to contact the Attendance Office to discuss attendance.
- The target at Wymondham High Academy is 96% attendance.
- The Attendance Officer provides the Governing Body with attendance data in a regular report.
- Rewarding good attendance is incorporated within the Academy's Celebration system.
- To ensure all parents are aware of and have an understanding of the DfE guidance on unauthorised absence and the taking of annual holiday during term time a letter is sent each year detailing the information. (Fixed Penalty Warning Notice letter)

The Attendance Notice Board is displayed in our main Reception area and is updated weekly. It details the Best Form Attendance of the week, Best House Attendance of the week and Termly / Yearly Celebrations. The WHA Attendance Target is 96% (National Target 95%).

Procedures for Lateness

The overwhelming majority of our students arrive on time for morning registration, however, some are persistently late. As a school, we are responsible for ensuring students are not only able to develop academic skills, but also those skills which prepare them for later life. The importance of punctuality is clear and though we appreciate it may not always be possible to arrive on time, we feel it is essential to respond to persistent poor punctuality.

The Academy day timings are: students are expected to be on site by 8.30am the AM morning register is taken promptly at 8.35am. (Students arriving late after 9.10am without a valid reason will incur the U code; Late After Registration is closed. This is an **unauthorised mark** for the whole of the morning session.) Students are required to be in Lesson 5 for the PM afternoon registration at 1.55pm (1.15pm on Tuesdays). The AM and PM session are the legal attendance registers.

- Students arriving late without a valid reason will be issued with a sanction of a lunchtime detention **on the day** of lateness on **every occasion** they are late. Failure to attend the lunchtime detention will result in an escalated sanction.
- For more than 3 occasions of lateness during a half term, students will be invited to meet with the Principal and Attendance Officer to discuss reasons for lateness and any support school can offer.
- If there is no improvement during a following 3 week monitoring period, parents will be invited along with the student to a meeting. A formal Action Plan will be drawn up.
- Punctuality will be monitored for a further 3 week period; should there be no improvement, parents and students will be requested to attend a Governor's Disciplinary meeting.
- Students will also be required to attend a detention on the next available INSET day.

In the circumstance where a child has been absent for a period of 3 days and it has not been possible to make telephone contact with the parent / pupil, a home visit will be undertaken to ensure that the pupil is safe. The visit will comprise two members of the support team. They will not enter the property but will ask to see the child / children and determine the reason for absence.

If, during the home visit, no contact can be made, the police and MASH team will be contacted. Daily contact will continue to be attempted following this intervention.

Leaving or returning to site during the school day

Students arriving late, leaving site or returning from appointments must sign in at Attendance Office situated in North Block.

Appendix 1 – Leave of Absence during term time

Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be granted by the Academy for a holiday taken during term time. As part of improving all students' life chances, the Academy does not authorise holidays taken in term time and has the right to serve Fixed Penalty Notices to those parents who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation.

Appendix 2 – Sanctions

Prosecution in court can carry penalties of up to £2500 and/or a term of imprisonment.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices are a sanction introduced for dealing with unauthorised absence from the Academy and require a parent to pay a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or rises to £120 thereafter. The Local Authority will take legal action if the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of date of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1000 and a criminal record for each parent.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from Penalty Notices.

Attendance Office contact details;

To report an absence, please call the Attendance Line on 01953 713103

To discuss any concerns you may have regarding attendance, please contact the Attendance Officer:-

Mrs Culfear

Direct line: 01953 713103

Email : culfearc@wh-at.net