



WYMONDHAM HIGH ACADEMY

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POLICY STATEMENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 of attendance and punctuality. We will work towards a goal of 100% attendance for every student. WHA believes that high achievement is inextricably linked to good attendance. Our mantra is: Every school day counts.

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

It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to improve attendance and punctuality.

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 are aware of the implications of poor attendance and potential PA (Persistent Absent) status and take appropriate action to support to improve attendance.

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 (*defined in Appendix 1*) have a legal responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends 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.

ACADEMY, STUDENT AND PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

ACADEMY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Seeks to ensure that all its students access a full-time education, attend school regularly which allows all to realise their potential.

- Will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Encourages good attendance and will investigate unexplained and unjustified absenteeism by challenging the behaviour of those students and parents who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Should a student experience any difficulties in terms of attendance or punctuality, the Academy will work with the family to overcome these where possible.
- Staff at both North and South reception will greet students arriving late, support where necessary or challenge lateness.
- 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.
- To have an effective and efficient system of communication with parents together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.

STUDENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

- 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.
- If late to the Academy, sign in at the attendance office.
- If permission has been granted to leave the Academy, sign out at the attendance office.

PARENTS

- The term 'Parent' is legally defined in appendix 1.
- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- If a student is prevented from attending school or arriving on time, families are asked to notify the Attendance Office before 8.55am every morning of an absence (or lateness) with full information regarding the reason. There is no need to write or email the school when returning unless the child's attendance is under 90% and medical evidence is required.
- A student's absence will be considered unauthorised until a reason is provided and considered by the Academy. Families should not take any holiday during term time. Students have 13 weeks holiday a year. (See Appendix 2)
- 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 reception providing an explanation for lateness. If a student arrives after 9.00am, 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 all lessons.

STUDENT ABSENCE

A register is a formal, legal document and taken by staff every lesson. All students will have individual records of attendance / punctuality as taken from the official register. Approved DfE symbols are used to indicate the nature of absence.

If a student is absent without notification by 9.00am, 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. Where there is medical supporting evidence to indicate longer term absence a return date should be specified.

It is the Academy's decision whether or not an absence will be authorised. Authorised absence is recorded in line with DfE guidance. Absence from school **may be authorised** if it is for the following reasons:

- Details given for a 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, e.g. "A bug", "Illness" – More information is required to be authorised.
- 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)

An absence is an absence, regardless of it being authorised or not.

PERSISTANT ABSENCE

Persistent absence is defined as an attendance under 90%. In other aspects of life, a score of 90% would be a very good result indeed (e.g. an examination result). At first glance this seems to be a good attendance rate. However, if we dig a little deeper, an attendance rate of 90% is not as good as first thought.

90% attendance means half a day off per week, or a day a fortnight.

1 year at 90% attendance = 4 school weeks' worth of lessons missed.

90% attendance over 5 years = ½ of a school year missed.

Students attendance is monitored on a daily basis and a range of intervention strategies are employed when attendance falls below 93%. We operate the following tiers of support:

- Stage 1 – Informal - Phone call and email communications with parents
- Stage 2 – Informal - Attendance Support Meeting (ASM)
- Stage 3 – Formal - Attendance Panel Meeting (APM)
- Stage 4 – Formal - Initial Fast Track (FT)
- Stage 5 – Formal - Fast track review

The Attendance Office will work with parents and students to ensure better and more consistent attendance. This starts informally, offering support and conversations to establish reasons for absence and how the school can help to improve attendance. Lack of engagement at this stage will result in an escalation to stage 3 or 4.

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

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 3). 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. If parents choose not to attend, the fast track panel will still meet and construct an action plan.
- 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.

PROCEDURES FOR FOLLOWING UP ABSENCE

If notification from parents has not been received, a 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. On the fourth day of no contact, a home visit will be made to check the welfare of the student (Appendix 4). The visit will comprise two members of the support team. They will not enter the property but will ask to see the child 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.

See Appendix 4 – Procedure for no school attendance and no contact

SUPPORTING THE RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER LONG-TERM ABSENCE

There are sometimes genuine cases where students return after a prolonged illness and/or absence. 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.

The team member responsible for supporting students back to school after a long-term absence is Mrs Allen.

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. **Lack of punctuality is damaging to all learners and must be eliminated.**

Poor punctuality has an impact:

- 5 minutes late is **3** days lost each year

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 8.55am 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 lunchtime detention sanction **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 a member of the attendance team 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.

LEAVING OR RETURNING TO SITE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

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

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. The school attendance target is for every child to exceed 96% attendance.

- Rewarding good attendance is incorporated within the Academy's Celebration system.
- The Attendance Officer provides the Governing Body with attendance data in a regular report.
- Parents are welcome to contact the Attendance Office to discuss attendance.
- A Fixed Penalty Warning Notice letter is sent to parents annually. This is 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.

May 2021 – Policy currently under review

APPENDIX 1 – DEFINING ‘PARENT’

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES. Under section 576 of the Education Act 1996, a parent is defined in relation to a child or young person as also including any individual: (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him.

This includes; Parents, step parent, parents partners, legal guardians, foster carers, grandparents and other family members.

APPENDIX 2 – 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 3 - 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 21days 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.

APPENDIX 4 – PRODUCE FOR NO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND NO CONTACT

A flow diagram detailing how the school will deal with no contact from parents during an absence.

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 Team:- smo-attendance@wh-at.net

Ms Sparshott – Attendance Officer

Mrs Allen – Attendance Welfare Officer

Mrs Reynolds – Attendance Administrator

Mr Tarr – Assistant Principal – Behaviour and Inclusion

Miss Black – Assistant Principal – Progress and Achievement