



Attendance policy (Years 7-11)

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Next review date: Sept 2022 (unless amended)

Policy Version Control

Policy prepared by	Academy Attendance Leader
Responsible committee	SLT
Date approved by committee	Sept 2020
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Contents

1. Policy statement and principles	3
1.1 Policy aims and principles.....	3
1.2 Complaints.....	3
1.3 Monitoring and review.....	3
2. Roles and responsibilities	4
2.1 Key personnel.....	4
3. Key principles.....	5
3.1 Definitions.....	5
3.2 Academy Attendance Procedures.....	6
3.3 Rewards.....	8
Annex A – Term Time Absence Request Form	9
Annex B – Template Attendance Awareness/Meeting Letters	10

1. Policy statement and principles

1.1 Policy aims and principles

We believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. The academy aims to raise standards in education and to ensure that students achieve their full potential. We recognise that this aim is not possible if they do not regularly attend the academy, or are persistently late.

Students are expected to attend the academy every day. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at the academy attend regularly and are punctual. The academy will make every effort to implement appropriate support to parents and students in this.

Attendance and punctuality issues can have a detrimental effect on the education that a student receives. Evidence shows that missing out on lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind and the tendency for them to achieve less than those students with a good attendance record.

We are committed to:

- the promotion of good attendance and reduction of absences
- ensuring every student has access to full-time education
- acting early to address patterns of absence and poor punctuality

This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by the academy and is written in line with current legislation and guidance.

1.2 Complaints

All complaints are dealt with under the **OAT Complaints Policy**.

Complaints should be made in writing and will follow the OAT complaint procedures and set timescales. The handling of complaints may be delegated to an appropriate person.

The outcome of the complaint will be communicated in writing.

1.3 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and / or government guidance
- As a result of any other significant change or event
- In the event that the policy is determined not to be effective

If there are urgent concerns these should be raised to the Academy Attendance Leader in the first instance for them to determine whether a review of the policy is required in advance of the review date.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Key personnel

Principal		Dennis Kirwan
Contact Details	Email	dennis.kirwan@bushfield.co.uk
	Telephone	01733 404050
Safeguarding Lead		Leigh Drew
Contact Details	Email	leigh.drew@bushfield.co.uk
	Telephone	01733 233014
Academy Attendance Leader		tba
Contact Details	Email	Attendance@bushfield.co.uk
	Telephone	01733 404373

3. Key principles

The academy will keep an admission register and attendance register. The contents of which includes all students, their personal details, the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

The academy will take the legal attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. Lesson registers will also be taken throughout the academy day. On each morning and afternoon session we will record student attendance using the national codes. Students will not be marked present if they were not in during the period when the register is open. If there are any absences then we will follow these up in order to ascertain the reason and record the absence using the correct code on the register.

The academy day starts at **08.30am**. All students should be in their tutor room at this time. Students if arriving after this time will receive a late mark. Registers are marked by **08.35 am**. The registration session closes at **09.00am**. Any student arriving after this time will receive a mark to show that they are on site, late, but will be recorded as an unauthorized late, (unless an exceptional reason has been provided) which will constitute an absent mark for the particular session.

During the afternoon session, the registration session commences at **1.15pm**, with the registers closing at **1.45pm**, the same marks will be recorded ie late mark if arriving before **1.45pm** and an unauthorised late being recorded if missing the entire session.

Student access to the academy is available after 08.00am, with entry via the Housebase. After 8.30am Students are required to enter the academy via the front main reception and sign in late at Student Reception, If a student shows a regular pattern of lates, ie three or more over a given period, the student will be requested to attend a tutor period detention, to repay the time missed. Failure to attend any given detention will cause the matter to be escalated to Head of House/Academy detention whereby the amount of time will be determined accordingly. If there is a regular pattern of unauthorized lates (absences) the matter will be referred to the Academy Attendance Leader for further action under the Academy Attendance Protocols as appropriate.

3.1 Definitions

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend.

Under this judgment a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

Absent

A student is classed as **absent** if their arrival to the academy is after the register has closed or if they do not attend for **any** reason.

An **authorised absence** is:

- An absence for sickness for which the academy has received prior notification and upon return the student has produced documentary evidence (as and when required under the Academy Attendance Protocols)
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the academy day for which the academy has granted leave (upon production of documentary proof of appointment attendance)
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy has granted leave (subject to term time request form being completed)
- An absence due to a family emergency, ie for exceptional circumstances that lead the absence to be unavoidable, supporting evidence will be requested.

Where a student has a long-term medical condition, reference should be made to the DfE and Local Authority Peterborough City Council, Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policies.

An **unauthorised absence** is defined as:

- Parents keeping children from attending the academy unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences for which no acceptable reason/explanation has been received
- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed
- Day trips and holidays in term time which do not constitute exceptional circumstances/unavoidable.
- Leaving the academy for no reason during the day – truancy

A Persistent Absentee is the Governments definition of a student who has a poor level of attendance, - 90% at any time over the academic year. The absences can be either unauthorised or authorised. In the case of a student having unauthorised absences, this can lead to legal action being taken.

3.2 Academy Attendance Procedures

Parents are requested to notify the academy on the first morning and every subsequent morning of the child's absence by telephoning the main office **absence line tel: 01733 404351** to advise that their child is absent and the reason why, this is in line with safeguarding procedures.

The academy will operate a First Day Contact; if students are absent without notification parents/carers will be contacted and asked for the reason for absence. Should it not be possible to contact the Parent/carer, attempts will be made to contact any person listed as an emergency contact. After a period of absence Parent/carers are requested to confirm the reason for the absence in the form of a written note within the student planner.

Appointments

As far as possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of the academy day. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the academy prior to the appointment. Students must attend the academy before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the student to leave during the day, they must be signed out/collected by an adult listed on the student's record.

Should a student arrive late to the Academy following an appointment, they should report to Student Reception and sign in on 'Inventry' a computerised system, where a member of the Attendance Team will ensure correct registration for the session. If not documentary evidence is not provided prior to the actual appointment, Student and Parent/Carer will be requested to provide such proof upon arrival at school.

Religious observations

Parents must inform the academy at least 4 weeks in advance if absence is required for a day of religious observance. The academy will authorise such absences where a reasonable request is made. Parents should inform the Academy PRIOR to any absence due to religious observance. Reference will be made to the LA Policy regarding Religious Observance, as of Oct 2019.

Term time leave

We require parents to observe the term times of the academy, details of which are on the academy website and in the Student Planner. The academy will only authorise leave of absence during term time in exceptional/unavoidable circumstances. If the academy grants a leave request we will determine the length of time that the student can be away from the academy. We do not have the discretion to authorise holidays during term time.

In pursuance of the change in legislation Sep 2013, this academy will assess each application on its individual merits. Only in **exceptional circumstances, being an unavoidable incident** may the academy agree to authorise a period of absence during term time. It is worthy of note that any request for the purpose of a holiday during term time will **not** be deemed as exceptional circumstances or unavoidable and therefore will not be authorised. Any period of **2 days/4 sessions or more** of unauthorised absence will result a request to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice Fine. This is in line with the LA Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

How the academy will deal with concerns relating to poor attendance

- This academy has an Academy Attendance Leader who has responsibility for all issues relating to the attendance of students on roll of the academy. The role encompasses the responsibility for assisting parents and students in the removal of any barriers preventing regular attendance. Additionally the AAL is able to instigate legal proceedings/sanctions as appropriate.
- Academy staff will work with students, parents and other agencies to resolve academy related issues which are impacting on a student's attendance. In the first instance of low attendance being identified, currently any student having attendance of 95% or below, the Parent/Carer will be informed by letter. If there continues to be a decline in the attendance, the Parent/Carer will be requested to attend a meeting in the academy to discuss the issues with the students' Head of House and/or Academy Attendance Leader. The severity/concern over the attendance will determine the level at which the meeting is held.
- If appropriate after House initiatives, the level of attendance continues to be of concern Parents/carers will be requested to attend a further meeting with the Academy Attendance Leader. It is hoped that during this meeting an action plan to prevent any further decline in the attendance will be agreed by all.
- This academy adheres to the LA's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in the use of Penalty Notices for persistent absence. Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 enabling parents to discharge potential liability for the offence of non-attendance at school by paying a penalty within an allotted time frame. Failure to pay the penalty on time will result in the LA either prosecuting for the original offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 or withdrawing the notice if it is proven that it contains material errors or was issued in incorrectly. The AAL is able to determine which legal sanction is pursued.
- In addition to being a sanction for 'one off periods of absence', (2 days/4 sessions or more unauthorised absences) Penalty Notices will be used for persistent absence throughout the academy where 8 sessions or more of absence are recorded as unauthorised. The use of Penalty Notices will be considered and used for identified groups of students who are either causing concern or are at a significant time within their education. In line with the PCC PN Protocol, this academy will request the issue of Penalty Notices to parents/carers of students who fail to show a significant improvement in the attendance once it has been brought to the attention of the parent/carer. The issue of the PN is an alternative to initiating legal proceedings within a Magistrates Court. It provides the parent with the opportunity to acknowledge the offence of failing to ensure their child regularly attends the academy by payment of a fine i.e £60 per child per parent/carer, rising after 21 days of non-payment to £120 per child per parent/carer, once paid thus discharging their liability.

- The use of Local Authority Penalty Notices has been adopted by this academy. Penalty Notices will therefore be used as a deterrent to continued unauthorised absences and in respect of unauthorised absences due to requests for a period of absence not deemed to meet exceptional circumstances/unavoidable incident.

It is worthy of note that OBA will attempt to work with all students and families in order to avoid prosecution. This academy works with Peterborough City Council Legal Services in respect of the instigation of any legal proceedings against Parent/Carers, relating to non- school attendance should it be deemed appropriate. The academy has a duty to prevent a Student's attendance falling into the criteria of Persistent Absentee (PA), having 90% or less attendance at any time over the academic year.

- The academy will support the re-integration of students sensitively after any lengthy period of absence and involve all appropriate staff, giving access to counselling or multi agency services as appropriate.

3.3 Rewards

The academy acknowledges 100% attendance in the following ways:

- Awarding of behaviour points leading to rewards being available to the student
- Recognition of great attendance at significant award evenings
- Opportunity to reach their potential by having great but expected attendance to their lessons

Trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below 95% these privileges may be taken away.

It is hoped that by following this policy the Academy will work in partnership with parents/carers, students and external agencies to support and promote maximum attendance as a priority.

Annexes

- A. Term time absence request form. (amended per year by date)
- B. Attendance Awareness Letters – templates 1-3 model layout

Annex A

TERM TIME ABSENCE REQUEST- Jan 2020

Ormiston Bushfield Academy wishes to encourage all students to attend regularly in order that they are able to access the full curriculum offered and therefore all achieve their potential. In line with the academy attendance policy we adhere to the LA Penalty Notice protocol as a tool to discourage the removal of any student from the Academy during term time. Please note:

- **A REQUEST SHOULD BE COMPLETED A MINIMUM OF 4 WEEKS BEFORE THE REQUIRED DATE AND SHOULD INCLUDE DETAILS OF ANY OTHER SIBLINGS.**
- **THE REASON FOR THE REQUEST IS DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES/UNAVOIDABLE CAUSES ONLY; PLEASE NOTE FAMILY HOLIDAYS AND WEDDINGS, BIRTHDAYS ETC DO NOT CONSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.**
- Parents do **NOT** have any right for their child to have a leave of absence authorised during the term. If the request is unauthorised and is **2** consecutive school days or more, a request will be made to the LA for a Penalty Notice to be issued. This is a fine of a minimum of **£60 per child per parent/carer, which if unpaid after 21 days rises to £120 per child per parent/carer.**
- Parent/carer(s) are responsible for ensuring the academy is made aware of the reasons for all planned absences via this form.
- Parents/carer(s) should also note that if the request is authorised due to it being for **exceptional circumstances**, failure to travel and return on the expected dates, incurring additional absences will cause the period to be unauthorised which may also result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

We/I request that my child (full names): _____ DoB: _____
 Year Group _____ be granted a period of authorised absence,

From (date): _____ To (date): _____ inclusive. Total school days _____

For the following purpose:

***YOU MAY ATTACH A SUPPORTING LETTER**

Other children in the family are:

Name	Age/yr Group	School	Please note you are required to complete an individual application to each school.

We/I understand that a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority if the request is denied and my child(ren) is/are absent during this period, I also understand failure of my child to travel/return on the expected dates incurring additional absences may also result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

Both parents/carers of student are required to sign, detailing full names please.

Signed Parent/carer (printed in full, first & surname).....Date.....

Signed Parent/carer (printed in full, first & surname).....Date.....

Authorised.....Unauthorised.....

Signed..... Principal; Mr Dennis Kirwan Date.....

A decision letter will be sent to the Parent(s)/carers.

Annex B

Attendance Awareness Letter (model may be amended)

Dear «

Re: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname»
Group: «year_reg»

DOB: «date_of_birth»

Tutor

I am writing to make you aware of «chosen_forename»'s attendance level which is currently «percentage_attendance»%. This level of attendance is a concern. Please see the attached Attendance Certificate highlighting the number of absences.

Although we are aware of the reasons for «chosen_forename»'s absences as an Academy we have a duty to ensure you are also aware of the impact that these absences have had. Additionally it is hoped that you will support «chosen_forename» in improving the situation in the future wherever possible.

Good attendance is central to ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. The monitoring of pupil attendance levels and patterns is routine within the academy therefore, if «chosen_forename»'s attendance continues to be a concern, showing no significant improvement from the date of this letter, we will contact you again.

Additionally, please note that this Academy adheres to the Local Authority Penalty Notice protocol regarding unauthorised absences.

Alternatively if you wish to discuss any aspect of «chosen_forename»'s attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Head of House

Enc: Attendance Certificate re:

House Attendance Meeting Letter

Dear

House Attendance Meeting

**Re: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» DOB: «date_of_birth» Tutor
Group: «year_reg»**

Further to my letter dated (date), I write to inform you that there are further concerns regarding «chosen_forename»'s attendance. This level of attendance is a concern. Please see the attached Attendance Certificate highlighting the number of absences.

I would now like to meet with you to discuss how the situation can be improved. The aim of this discussion will be to support you and «chosen_forename» in the identification and removal of any difficulties or barriers that prevent regular attendance.

Additionally please note that the Academy adheres to the Local Authority Penalty Notice protocol in respect of unauthorised absences.

(*Please delete where appropriate)

*As per our recent telephone conversation I would like to confirm that a meeting has been arranged as below:

*I have attempted to make contact in order to arrange a meeting, however I would like to offer:

Date:

Time:

At Ormiston Bushfield Academy

It is important that you and «chosen_forename» attend this meeting as a face to face discussion will provide the opportunity to work together on improving the situation.

If you are unable to attend, I would be grateful if you could make contact in order for the meeting to be rearranged for a mutually convenient time.

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Head of «house» House

Enc: Attendance Certificate re:

Academy Attendance Meeting

Dear

Re: Academy Attendance Meeting
«forename» «surname»

DOB: «date_of_birth»

Tutor Group: «year_reg»

Further to previous communication regarding attendance concerns I am writing to advise you that «forename»'s attendance remains of concern. A copy of the Attendance Certificate is attached.

I am not inviting you to an Academy Attendance Meeting.

Date:

Time:

Ormiston Bushfield Academy

It is important that you and «forename» attend this meeting when we will discuss any issues which are impacting on «forename»'s attendance and agree an action plan to improve the situation.

May I remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of your child at this Academy.

If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from the Academy are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

Yours sincerely

Academy Attendance Leader

Enc: Attendance Certificate re: