

Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy

Attendance Policy

Date adopted: October 2017

Next review date: September 2020

Policy Version Control

Policy type	OAT Model Policy
Policy prepared by (name and department)	OAT
Last review date	October 2017
Description of changes	<p>Key Principals Update to the Key Principals to be more specific about the actions of the academy and the expectation that the parents will provide the phone numbers of three different adults.</p> <p>Update of the percentage for Persistent Absence (PA) and a definition for persistent lateness and its potential consequences.</p> <p>3.2 Absence Procedure Expectation added for parents to call before 9am on each day of absence, what students should do if they arrive late and the process around religious observations</p> <p>3.3 Intervention Updated with the introduction of template letters (appendix 1-3) and return to school interviews after a period of absence.</p>
Name and date of line manager's approval	Sarah Bloomer – September 2017
Date of executive approval	Jason Howard – September 2017
Date released	5 th October 2017
Next review date	September 2020

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.....	4
3.1 Definitions.....	4
3.2 Absence procedures.....	5
3.3 Intervention	6
3.4 Rewards.....	6

Appendix 1 Model letter (first absence)

Appendix 2 Model letter (absence concern)

Appendix 3 Model letter (persistent absence)

I. Policy statement and principles

I.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 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 endeavours to support 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:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education
- Act early to address patterns of absence and poor punctuality

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

I.2 Complaints

All complaints are dealt with under the **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.

I.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 Senior Vice Principal 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

Senior Vice Principal		Mr M Riley
Contact Details	Email	m.riley@scacademy.co.uk
	Telephone	01922-685777
Attendance Officer		Miss R Carnall
Contact Details	Email	r.carnall@scacademy.co.uk
	Telephone	01922-685777

3. Key principles

The academy will keep an admission register and attendance register. The contents of which includes all students, their personal details, to include at least three telephone numbers for different adults, to ensure that the academy can always contact someone in the event of an emergency, the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

The academy will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. On each occasion, 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 will send a text message to any parents who they are unable to contact via telephone.

The academy day starts at 8.45am. All students should be in their classroom at this time.

Registers are marked by 8.50am. Students will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

The register closes at 9.10am. Students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site (U) but will count as an absent mark. Students arriving late to the academy should sign in at student reception.

3.1 Definitions

A student is classed as **absent** if they arrival at the academy 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 granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the academy day for which the academy has granted leave (where possible medical evidence should be provided)
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

An **unauthorised absence** is defined as:

- Parents keeping children from attending the academy unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Leaving the academy for no reason during the day

The academy defines persistent absenteeism (PA) as missing 10% or more of schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. This is in line with the Department for Education strategy.

3.2 Absence procedures

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the academy of a student absence and also to inform us of any changes to contact details.

Parents should contact the school on the first day of absence, stating a reason for absence and expected return date. Where possible, medical evidence should be provided. When no reason has been given for absence, a school text message will be sent. Parents can reply to this text message to record a reason for absence.

It is therefore essential that student contact details are kept up to date. Contact forms are available at reception, please complete a form to notify us of any changes.

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 by an adult listed on the student's record.

If no note is received, Reception will contact home to confirm the appointment. Students will not be allowed to leave the academy without verbal or written consent from a parent/carer.

Religious observations

Parents must inform the academy in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. The academy will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made. Parents should inform the academy **PRIOR** to any absence due to religious observance.

Term time leave

We require parents to observe the term times of the academy. The academy will only authorise leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. If the academy grants a leave request, we will determine the length of time that the student can be away from the academy.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- During Year 7 when a student is settling into the academy
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a student's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a student's attendance is already below 100%

If term time leave is not granted, taking a student out of the academy will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

3.3 Intervention

The academy recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year. We recognise that certain groups of students may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.

The academy's attendance target is 97%. Details of our absence levels can be found on the academy website or are available from the Attendance Officer. Students can ask to see their individual attendance on the tracker in form time.

When a student's attendance drops below expectations [appendix 1] will be sent outlining the support that is available to them to ensure good attendance. If a student's absence then drops further a concerns letter [appendix 2] will be sent. If no improvement is seen, parents will receive an unauthorised letter [appendix 3] informing them of the decision to unauthorise any further absences unless medical evidence is provided.

If a student's absence drops below 90%, the Attendance Officer will be informed. The Attendance Officer will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officer has the power to refer to the Local Authority for sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

3.4 Rewards

The academy acknowledges 100% attendance in the following ways:

- Form time rewards and initiatives
- 100% attendance recognition in assembly (termly)
- Prize draw for those that achieve and maintain 100% attendance

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Form time rewards and initiatives for those who improve attendance/punctuality
- Recognition in assemblies for most improved attendance and punctuality
- Prize draw for most improved attendance and punctuality

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

Appendix I

«salutation»
«address_block»
«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»,

I am writing with reference to «chosen_forename»'s recent absence(s) from the Academy and to take this opportunity to give you some information regarding the provision we are able to make for students, should «chosen_forename» feel unable to attend in the future:-

(Add/delete as appropriate)

- If a student is feeling a little unwell in the morning, they may well improve during the day and therefore, it is usually better to send them to the Academy and we can provide a quiet working area until they feel able to re-join their classes.
- We can allow students to leave lessons early to avoid crowds should they have an injury.
- We have a full time First Aider at (insert academy name) that can assess the condition and, with your authorisation, administer medication should «chosen_forename» feel unwell after arriving at the Academy
- We also have Mentoring Support for any students who have been absent due to sadness from a bereavement or other personal circumstances.
- Progress Coordinators and Guidance Managers are always willing to support students and therefore should «chosen_forename» have any problems or issues that may prevent «him_her» from wanting to attend, please contact (insert academy name) immediately so that these problems or issues can be resolved.

We have a strong network of staff here at (insert academy name), and I am sure you will agree that whatever problem «chosen_forename» may encounter, there is support available to «him_her», to ensure regular attendance to the Academy.

With kind regards,

Appendix 2

«salutation»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

«forename» «surname»

Dear «salutation»

I am writing to advise that «forename»'s attendance is currently «percentage_attendance»%, which is a concern to (insert academy name) as this has a great impact on «forename»'s learning.

All students should reach a minimum of 98% attendance and I look forward to receiving your co-operation in this matter. The academy will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance closely and look forward to seeing an improvement.

Please note that if attendance deteriorates further then school will have no alternative but to unauthorise all absences unless a Doctor's note/medical note/hospital letter is provided for every absence.

I regret to remind you that section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it Parents/Carers responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at the school which they are on roll. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken.

If there are any issues in school then «forename» should attend the academy and approach «his_her» Progress Coordinator or Guidance Manger so that we can work together to resolve them.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 3

«salutation»
«address_block»

Student - «forename» «surname» - «reg»

Dear «salutation»

I am writing to advise you that «forename»'s attendance is currently «percentage_attendance»%. We place great importance on attendance at (insert academy name) and the link between attainment and attendance and as such we expect all of our students to reach an attendance percentage of at least 98%.

I have no alternative at this time but to inform you that because of «forename»'s persistent absence, any absence «he_she» may now have will be recorded as unauthorised and a doctor's note/medical certificate will be required to explain «his_her» absence.

For ever one day of absence **5 lessons are missed**, for one week's absence **25 lessons are missed**. This is time that cannot be given back to «forename» and it may impact on any examinations «he_she» may be entered for.

I have to inform you that «forename»'s attendance is now a cause for concern and this will be reported to the Local Authority which could lead to further action being taken, which in more serious cases can mean court action.

I am sure you will agree that in order for «forename» to receive the best education available to «him_her», «he_she» needs to be attending the academy regularly.

Please contact (insert academy name) as soon as possible to discuss the matter and find a way to work together to improve «forename»'s attendance.

With kind regards,