

Attendance and Registration Policy	
Policy Ref	Educ004
Status	
Purpose	
Committees	Staff and Pupil Wellbeing, Local Governing Body
Other linked policies	Behaviour, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Missing Child and Risk Assessment Policies.
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Aim

1. At Discovery Academy we aim to bring out the best in every child. We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Rationale

2. The Academy aims to assist all pupils to reach their learning potential and we believe that children are more likely to maximise their achievement and attainment if they attend on time and regularly. We recognise that by working together parents and the Academy can improve a pupil's life chances by ensuring their frequent and punctual attendance. Good attendance is important because statistics show a direct link between higher achievement and good attendance. Children who attend school regularly find school routines and school work easier to cope with. As a result, our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding and good behaviour. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Legal Framework

3. Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
4. A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
5. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:
 - present;
 - absent;
 - present at approved educational activity; or
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
6. To support good attendance the academy will:

Monitor attendance daily

7. The Academy will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular uninterrupted attendance is vital to the child's educational progress.

8. The Academy opens at 8.45 and all external doors are locked at 8.50 for the safety of all the children.
9. Registers will be called twice daily at the start of each morning and afternoon session and will be kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes (in accordance with DfE guidelines). Registers are taken in electronic format using Capita SIMS. Should the Capita SIMS platform be inaccessible staff will take a paper register and update the system once Capita SIMS is back on line. In the event of staff absence due to illness or training, office staff will update Capita SIMS following the completion of a paper register by the cover staff.
10. Any children arriving after 8.50am will enter via the main entrance; children arriving after 9.00am will be marked as late by Office Staff. The reason for late arrival will be entered on the electronic register as a 'note'.
11. Attendance information entered into Capita SIMS will be cross-referenced with names in the late book, e mails and absence messages left on the Academy answer phone.
12. The office staff will provide the Deputy Principal with a breakdown of daily reported absence. Concerns about individual absences will be followed up by the Deputy Principal, who will contact parents directly.

Monitor attendance weekly

13. Should a class teacher have particular concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality this will be raised with the Deputy Principal.
14. The Deputy Principal will investigate the concern. Attendance of all children falling below 90% will be discussed, as is any unauthorised absence (1 session or more) or unauthorised holiday absence (holiday not approved by the Executive Principal). As a result of this, the Deputy Principal will contact parents directly to discuss pupil absence (this may take the form of a telephone conversation or a home visit), reasons for absence and how the Academy can support families to improve attendance.
15. These discussions will be recorded in the school attendance log and safeguarding documents where necessary. Should attendance not improve, due to repeated unauthorised absence of 2 sessions or more, the Academy will contact the parent(s) in writing asking them to attend a meeting in the Academy to complete a Parenting Contract. Should the parent decline a Parenting Contract, this may be used in evidence during any future prosecution.
16. If the Academy staff are still concerned about absence, despite a Parenting Contract being in place, the academy may ask for a doctor's note to confirm a child's illness, before authorising an absence.
17. In the event of prolonged unauthorised absence (ten sessions within a ten week period) resulting in a child's attendance falling below 85%, the Executive Principal may request that attendance is legally monitored by an external attendance officer.
18. Each half term, parents are informed in their child's report about their attendance to date, listing the number of authorised and if any, the number of unauthorised absences. The reporting dates run from the beginning of the academy year until the week before the end of the half term.
19. Where attendance of pupils in Nursery falls below 85% staff will consider whether their place should be removed and offered to another pupil.

Categorising absence

20. Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the Academy and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as

unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

21. Parents should advise the Academy by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the Academy with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.
22. Absence will be categorised as follows:
 - Illness In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the Academy that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. In some cases parents will receive a letter to prompt communication with Academy, or an appointment may be made with the Executive or Deputy Principal.
 - Medical/Dental Appointments Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the Academy day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to their child's form teacher.
 - Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.
 - Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending the Academy is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Expected First Day of Attendance

23. The Academy will enter pupils on the admission register on the first day on which the Academy has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the Academy must establish the reason for absence and mark the register accordingly. The Academy has procedures for following up these absences.

Family Holidays

24. From the 1st September 2013, the new legislation gives **no entitlement** to parents to take their child on holiday during the term time. Any exceptional circumstances are to be submitted in writing and will be referred to the Governing Body for consideration. The Executive Principal is no longer able to authorise up to 10 days absence for the purpose of a holiday in term time. Requests for leave in term time should only be authorised in 'exceptional' circumstance. The DFE are anticipating that not many absences for leave in term time are authorised by schools.
25. All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:
 - The expected date of return.
 - Those parents must contact the Academy should any delays occur.
 - That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected.
26. If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, the Academy may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their Academy place.
27. If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the Academy may issue a Penalty Notice.

28. Only in **exceptional circumstances** will absence of more than 10 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify why the holiday needs to be taken during term time.

Religious Observance

29. Due to the multi-faith nature of British society, the Academy recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend the Academy on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the Academy if they intend their child to be absent.
30. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than **one day** be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and **no more than three days in total** in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence

31. Absences will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.
32. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:
- A pupil's/family member's birthday;
 - Shopping for uniforms;
 - Having their hair cut;
 - Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes;
 - "Couldn't get up";
 - Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend the Academy; or
 - Holidays taken without the authorisation of the Academy.

Deletions from the Register

33. In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:
- The Academy is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
 - The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority.
 - The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
 - Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
 - Death of a pupil.
 - Transfer between schools.
 - Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
 - Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
 - A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
 - In custody for more than four months. (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
 - 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
 - Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

34. The Academy will follow the Local Authority Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Roles and Responsibilities

35. The Academy believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

36. As such, the Local Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents.
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree Academy attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Trust and Local Authority or Department of Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the Academy has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

37. The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return attendance data to the DfE as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

- Document interventions should legal proceedings be instigated.
38. Class Teachers/Pastoral Staff will:
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
 - Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
 - Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
 - Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation.
 - Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
 - Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence.
 - Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
 - Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
 - Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
39. Request that Parents will:
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
 - Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
 - Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
 - Contact the Academy if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
 - Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of Academy hours.
 - Ask the Academy for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
 - Inform the Academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
 - Support the Academy; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with the Academy and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
 - Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
 - Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
 - Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable; send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday.

Using Attendance Data

40. Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Trust and Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.
41. Every week the Executive Principal/Deputy Principal receives attendance data for the whole Academy. Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. We will share attendance data with the DfE and OfSTED as required.

Support Systems

42. We recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make the Academy aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement,

divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the staff identify any additional support that may be required.

43. The Academy also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.
44. The Academy will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:
 - Discussion with parents and pupils
 - Parenting contracts
 - Referrals to support agencies
 - Pupil Voice Activities
 - Friendship groups
 - PSHE
 - Additional learning support
 - Behaviour support
 - CAFs
45. Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the Academy will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Legal Sanctions

Prosecution

46. A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example it could be used where a parent has failed to engage in any supportive measures. It will be particularly useful as a sanction at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched and where the Local Authority considers that a prosecution would be too heavy handed.
47. The usual response to a first offence should be a warning rather than a penalty. However, a penalty notice can be issued without a warning in exceptional circumstances. These should be agreed with the Team Manager on behalf of the LA Lead for Behaviour and Attendance.
48. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months. Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Parenting Contracts (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

49. A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance. The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly. The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions. Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Tameside's Parenting Contract Protocol.

Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

50. Penalty Notices will be considered when:
 - A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school

- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve
 - A pupil is repeatedly late to school after the register has closed.
51. A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Tameside's Penalty Notice Protocol.