



**Upwood Primary**  
Academy



Policy:	Attendance Policy
Owner:	Miss L Clarke
Approving Board:	Academy Committee
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## **Attendance Policy**

### **Principles**

Upwood Primary Academy aims to work together with Parent/Carers and the Local Authority Attendance Officers (LAAOs) to ensure that all children registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We aim to improve the achievement of pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality by creating an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and seen to be valued by the whole school.

Good attendance by pupils is recognised and celebrated throughout the academic year with stars awarded for year groups achieving at least 95% attendance, each week.

### **Parent/Carers Responsibilities**

Parent/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

Parent/Carers must:

- Ensure all children attend regularly and punctually everyday unless prevented from doing so by illness or medical appointment.
- Inform the Academy in advance of any medical appointments during school time. Parents/carers may on occasions be asked to provide supporting evidence from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested.
- Ensure their child arrives at school in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Report any changes to contact details to the School Office to ensure the Academy has the most up to date contact information.

## **Registration**

- The classroom doors are opened at 8.45 am.
- All external classroom doors are closed at 8.55 am.
- Once the external classroom door has been closed, entry to the Academy is via the main entrance.
- Registers are open at 8.55 am and closed at 9.05 am. Pupils who arrive at school between 9.05am and 9.15am will be recorded as L, late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after 9.15 am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as U, unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

## **Lateness**

Children who are persistently late to school will miss a significant amount of their education.

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parent/Carers will initially receive a letter informing them of the Academy's concerns. Should the lateness continue, Parent/Carers will be invited to a meeting at Academy to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO) for pupils who are of statutory school age.

## **Reporting a Pupil Absence**

Parent/Carers must contact the Academy on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 9.30am.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, where the reason is still unknown, a member of staff will attempt to make contact with the Parent/Carers, via email.

If the absence continues into day two, a member of staff will call the main carers (priority one and two on the contact list), until a reason for absence is known. Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If communication is still not reached by day three, a welfare check to the child's home address will be arranged.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting evidence may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a text message which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, a letter that is headed from the medical professional or an appointment card. A period of absence will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment and travelling time, at the discretion of the Academy. Children who fail to return to school within a reasonable time following their medical appointment could result in an am/pm session being unauthorised.

## **Illness**

Children who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea or sickness, can return after they have been 48 hours clear.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezing and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and are well enough to return to school.

## **COVID-19**

If a pupil tests positive for COVID- 19, guidance suggests that the pupil should stay at home and can return to school after 3 days if they feel well enough and do not have a high temperature. Children with a high temperature should continue to remain at home.

As a school, we are continuing to maintain the good practice of regular handwashing and pupils are encouraged to cough and sneeze into a tissue to help reduce the risk of passing on any infections.

## **Academy Responsibilities**

All members of Academy staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness, with the Senior Leadership Team having overall responsibility in the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents/carers will always be informed by letter and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

If applicable, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO) for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a penalty notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

## **The Senior Leadership Team**

Lateness and attendance is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, in conjunction with School Office staff, who will:

- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial letter.
- Raise concerns as outlined below with Parent/Carers once attendance has fallen below the threshold set of 95%:
  - Step One: A letter is sent to Parents and Carers outlining the benefits of good attendance and encouraging this.
  - Step Two: A follow up letter is sent outlining the Academy's concerns about declining attendance. The letter indicates next steps in the event that attendance continues to decline.

- Step Three: A formal Parent Contract Meeting will be arranged, with Parent/Carers to discuss concerns and identify support which can be offered. Targets will be set to improve the attendance and/or lateness. These targets will be reviewed at the end of an agreed monitoring period.
  - Step Four: Should the targets set at step three not be met, following a review, despite every attempt made by the Academy to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) for children of statutory school age.
- Offer support or sign post to other areas of support within the community
  - Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance and/or lateness.
  - Monitor pupils' attendance within specific and identified groups
  - Monitor pupil absences for those with additional medical needs
  - Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils 'Child Missing in Education'.
  - Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to Home Educate their child(ren)
  - Follow procedures when deleting a pupil from roll
  - Meet with LAAO on the allocated visits to school, who will also monitor the registers and follow up any identified concerns.
  - Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
  - Monitor and act upon requests for term time leave of absence and ensure Parent/Carers are informed of procedures in relation to authorised/unauthorised leave

### **Authorised leave:**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness or a medical appointment. However, there is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending where the appointment falls within the school day.
- Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

### **Unauthorised leave:**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from the Academy without the permission of the school, even with the support of the Parent/Carers such as holidays or family celebrations.
- Medical appointments where supporting evidence of appointment details have not been provided when asked for.
- There has been no reason provided by the Parent/Carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow Academy procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.

- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

### **Guidance for Parents/Carers – Term Time Leave**

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion on headteachers agreeing to term time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete an Absence Request form and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

If the Academy suspect Term Time Leave has been taken but the parent/carers have not completed a Term Time Leave Request Form, we will write to parent/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

**Exceptional circumstance** (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis, such as up to two days absence from school to visit a dying relative, death of a family member, attendance at a funeral or any unavoidable one off event, but the following examples of requests for leave of absence, do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance; will not be authorised and could be subject to a penalty notice/fine for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term
- Trip of a lifetime
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad
- Relatives coming to visit
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.

### **Penalty Notice**

The fine for a penalty notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £120 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child (ren) this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

Parent/Carers who take unauthorised leave during term time or whose child has a pattern of unauthorised absence over any 4 week period could be subject to the issue of a penalty notice or prosecution.

If 3 or more term time leave Penalty Notices have been issued over a 3 year period then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered by the Local Authority.