



Attendance Policy

Spring 2018



St Martin's School



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Statement of Intent

All schools in the Whinless Down Academy Trust are committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. Including individual, class and whole school rewards.

If there are any problems affecting a pupil's attendance we will work in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to resolve problems as quickly as possible. We will adopt a focused intervention aimed at returning the pupil to full-time attendance. As part of the school attendance policy, referrals will be made to South Eastern Attendance Advisory Service (SEAAS) when necessary and where there are concerns about a child's attendance which have not been resolved by the school and/or when the school believes that their child's attainment is significantly impaired by his/her level of attendance.

The Trust Board, Local Governors and all staff, in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance in all schools within the Trust.

Parental Responsibility

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child is receiving a full-time education in accordance with Section 7 Education Act 1996. Children registered at a school within the Whinless Down Academy Trust must attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school EVERY DAY their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

The Role of the School Staff

The Executive Headteacher, supported by the Head of School has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The attendance officer notifies the Head of School of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff responsible for attendance to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence.
- A home visit will be made if appropriate by the a member of staff such as the FLO, attendance officer, PSA, Learning Mentor or other member of staff responsible for attendance.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes).
- Parents are informed of child's attendance figure in writing in Terms 1, 3 and 5 and at Parent Consultation appointments in Terms 2, 4 and 6.
- Parents of persistent absentees (below 90%) will be informed of their child's daily and weekly attendance every Friday until they reach an acceptable level.
- They liaise with parents/carers, SEAAS and other agencies as appropriate.

Punctuality

Appendix 1 sets out the times for the individual schools when pupils can arrive and the time that they need to be in school for registration.

All pupils who arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at parent consultations and will be referred to the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) the member of staff responsible for attendance such as the attendance officer (AO) and SEAAS. This can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016.

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions may lead to a referral to the SLO (School's Liaison Officer) at the Inclusion and Attendance Service (AS) for a Penalty Notice Warning letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child).
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority may instigate court proceedings.

Authorising Absence

Only the Executive Headteacher or Head of School can authorise absence.

Where there is doubt, the Executive Headteacher, on behalf of the Trust Board, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Executive Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Attendance and Lateness

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, at the pre-start meeting, attendance will be discussed and expectations of the Whinless Down Academy Trust explained to ensure good attendance can be established right from the start. The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

'Five Steps'

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, a FLO, a PSA or another member of staff responsible for attendance will call or home visit the parent to confirm the reason for absence and the FLO, PSA and/or the member of staff responsible for attendance will make home visits as appropriate.
2. Regular meetings with SEAAS (as required) to identify pupils with attendance below 90%. These pupils are then monitored weekly and further action is taken as appropriate.
3. Invitation to meet with the attendance team.
4. Referral to Early Help if appropriate.
5. Referral to SEAAS.

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Attendance Service is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings MUST be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

- 96% - 100% attendance – no concerns, but monitoring as required.
- Attendance falls below 96% - could initiate a referral to SEAAS and monitored through regular review meetings.
- Below 90% - Advise Attendance Service of child's attendance and consider Attendance Service or Penalty Notice where the absences have not been authorised.
- Consideration to Early Help

Please refer to Appendix 10 for guidance on what work should be undertaken by the school prior to referral.

Children Missing Education

No child missing education may be removed from the school roll without consultation with the Executive Headteacher.

Where a child is missing from education, the statutory guidance for Local Authority September 2016 will be followed by completing a referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school and have not given a forwarding address

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school will consider the following:

Actions by SEAAS

This may include:

- Home visits
- Attendance meetings
- Liaising with other agencies
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Early Help, CHYPS, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Requesting Penalty Notices from the Local Authority.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed (U code)
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Executive Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Requests for holidays in term time will **not** be authorised.

The Executive Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Trust Board (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Executive Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- With leave (given permission by the school)
- Due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- Religious Observation
- Failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child to be absent from school.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Holiday Absence

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (AS) Code of Conduct.
- AS receives a request to issue a penalty notice for an unauthorised holiday of 10 or more school sessions (5 days)
- AS issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

GDPR Statement

In managing your data we comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). You can view our GDPR policy and Privacy Notices on each of the school's website. Should you have any concerns please contact the Academy Business Manager, Michelle Noden – email admin@priorityfields.kent.sch.uk

Review

These guidelines and procedures will be reviewed regularly, with any changes being made as appropriate, particularly regarding any changes made by the DfE.

School attendance and attainment are very closely linked.

If a child is absent from school one day per week during their school life, that is 80% attendance and is equivalent to missing two full school years by the end of their secondary education.

Low attendance = a lot of missed learning and opportunities.

Please do not leave it until it is too late. If you are having problems with your child's school attendance make an appointment as soon as possible so that we can provide advice and support.

We can make a difference together

Appendix one

Priory Fields Start Times:

Key Stage 1 gates are opened at **8:45am** and the register is taken at **9:00am**.

All Key Stage 1 pupils who arrive late, but before **9:20am**, when the register closes, will be marked as late (L code). Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code).

Key Stage 2 gates are opened at **8:40am** and the register is taken at **8:50am**. All Key Stage 2 pupils who arrive late, but before **9:10am**, when the register closes, will be marked as late (L code). Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code).

St Martin's Start Times:

School is open from **8:35am** and the register is taken at **8:45am**. Pupils arriving between **8:45am** and **9am**, when the register closes, will be marked as late (L code). Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code).

Vale View Start Times:

School gates are opened at **8:30am** and the register is taken at **8:55am**. Pupils arriving between **8:55am** and **9:15am**, when the register closes, will be marked as late (L code). Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence (U code).