



Tollbar MAT
Family of Academies

ATTENDANCE POLICY

July 2020

Tollbar MAT recognises the fact that regular attendance and academic success go 'hand in hand'. Therefore, it is incumbent upon each Academy to ensure that:

- (i) Registration procedures are rigorous and comply with the DfE regulations.
- (ii) Accurate attendance statistics are compiled to inform future targets for student attendance.
- (iii) Unauthorised absences are promptly detected and followed up.
- (iv) Long term absentees are successfully reintegrated on their return to the Academy.

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring regular and punctual attendance of their children.

Following the coronavirus (COVID- 19) outbreak, attendance is mandatory from September except where statutory exemptions apply.

Aims

Our aims are:

- To strive to maintain the excellent level of attendance at each academy.
- To ensure that regular attendance assists students to be successful learners.
- To ensure all students have access to remote education should a closure be put in place due to the coronavirus (COVID- 19) outbreak as per Government guidance.

Background

Each Academy endorses the following DfE statements:

- A student who is authorised to take ten days' holiday during one whole academic year will attain only 94.7% attendance.
- There is a strong link between the amount of absence and the results/qualifications that a student achieves.
- Every lesson matters – children who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well at school.
- Research suggests that just seventeen days missed from school equates to a GCSE grade.

Attendance Procedures

The registers open each morning at 8:55am and all checks and amendments must be completed before 10:00am each day prior to the release of messages to parents via 'Keep Kids Safe' communication. The registers open at 1:30pm for the afternoon and close at 2:00pm.

Please note:

At present, each Academy uses the SIMS software package 'Attendance Manager' for the registration of all students in Years 7–11.

Absence

Parents must notify the Academy on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:55am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers must inform the Academy in the morning if their child is unable to attend due to illness. Parents/carers should telephone the Academy Attendance team or they can use the MyEd app.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the Academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy will ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the Academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Suspected coronavirus (Covid- 19)

Students must not come in the Academy if they have symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) or have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (Covid-19) or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (Covid-19). Parents must inform the Academy immediately of the results of the test. If the test is negative and they feel well enough they should attend the Academy.

If someone tests positive, they should follow the 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (Covid-19) infection'.

NHS Test and Trace process

Parents/carers must immediately inform the Academy if their child or member of their family are displaying symptoms. They will need to:

- book a test if their child or a member of their family are displaying symptoms. Children must not come into the Academy if they have symptoms, and will be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in the Academy. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (Covid-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (Covid-19).

Truancy

All staff are required to take a register at the commencement of each lesson and to check up on students who are frequently absent on a particular day. They must also follow up students who have been seen in an Academy but who are missing from their class.

Punctuality

Due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak the Academy will take in to account the late arrival to the Academy by students who are using public transport.

Being punctual is a pre-requisite to a session or a lesson having a purposeful start.

House Tutors must punish persistent lateness to an Academy and report offenders to Assistant Principals. Class teachers must insist on lessons starting promptly and again punish persistent offenders.

A team of Child Support Assistants are on duty each morning at an Academy gates to record students who arrive late.

Lateness is one sign of a poor attitude to learning and must not be allowed to become a habit.

“Slow to arrive means slow to learn” and this is totally contrary to the Academy ethos”.

ALL staff have an important part to play here.

Attendance Concern

Class teachers and tutors play an important role in ensuring a high level of attendance. If attendance of a student falls below 95% the teacher with responsibility for that student’s attendance will speak to the parents/carer, when relevant about their concerns. If parents are not spoken to, a letter will be issued. If attendance does not improve a referral to the EWO will be made.

The Role of the Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer plays a crucial role in assisting each Academy to maintain high standards of attendance and in supporting students with particular problems.

The Attendance Assistant meets with the EWO regularly to discuss attendance problems which have been identified. Assistant Principals and Pastoral Managers all receive instant feedback of these discussions via an ‘E-Mailed Memo’. This memo is also printed out and retained by the EWO as a record of the meetings.

Urgent telephone referrals to the EWO are made, as necessary, by members of the Attendance Team.

Long Term Absences

Each academy recognises its role in ensuring that children who are absent for a lengthy period due to illness, family bereavement, breakdown in the family unit etc are supported on their return to an Academy. Each Academy cannot have a set procedure for reintegration since all circumstances are different. Each Academy’s approach is therefore flexible but always has the same goal in mind:

“to reintegrate the student as quickly and fully as possible”.

Leave of Absence

Leave of Absence may only be granted by the Principal. Please submit at least two weeks before required absence. A student may be granted Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances where:

- a) an application has been made in advance to the Principal by a parent with whom the child normally resides, and
- b) the Principal considers that Leave of Absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

Parents or carers do not have the right to withdraw a student from the Academy to go on holiday or for any other reason during term-time. We would therefore ask for your support by ensuring that requests for leave of absence in term-time are made only in exceptional circumstances. Please ensure that even in exceptional circumstances you are granted Leave of Absence before you make any arrangements. This decision will be provided in writing. The Education Welfare Service will be informed of UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES relating to requests for Leave of Absence and will take appropriate action, which could include a Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Persistent Absence

- 1 The Government Department for Education identifies every child by name who has 20% absence over the autumn and spring terms. The pupil is classed as a Persistent Absentee. The absences may be authorised and/or unauthorised.
- 2 53 sessions of absence (a session is a morning or an afternoon) equals 20% absence.
- 3 Absence may be due to:
 - acute illness;
 - chronic illness;
 - medical and dental appointments;
 - holidays, whether with the Principal's permission or not;
 - religious observance;
 - exclusions;
 - lateness after the register closed (which is unauthorised absence);
 - absences which cannot be authorised because they are illegal, whether the parent is aware or not.
- 4 'The links between attendance and achievement are strong. Pupils with persistent absence are often those unlikely to attain at school and stay in education after the age of 16 years. They are also significantly more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour and youth crime and are more at risk of other negative outcomes (including teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol abuse)'. DfE Standards website.