



# Attendance Policy

**Document title:** Attendance Policy

**Version number:** 1.5

## **Policy Status**

**Date of Issue** February 2019

**Date to be revised** September 2023 - January 2024

## **Revision Log**

### **Date Brief detail of change**

07/03/2017 Amended to take into account of LA Trust academies  
primary/ secondary/local authorities Amended time of  
late registration

10/02/19 Amended to take account of revised KCC Code of Conduct to  
April 2017

10/02/19 'Y' code addition regarding Transport.

12/08/2021 DFE addendum 26 July 2021 - Removed 1 April 2022

25/07/2022 Review date amended /reference to Covid 19 removed.

January 2024 - Review of policy to incorporate mental health and wellbeing, and removing a pupil off roll.

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### 1.0 Statement of Intent

1. Leigh Academies Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. All academies will employ a wide range of strategies to do all they can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as a priority.
2. It is a fundamental part of Leigh Academies Trust ethos to celebrate success and achievement. Excellent attendance and punctuality are integral to a productive and successful education and career. Academies will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance of all students.
3. Parents and carers have a vital role, as well as a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance. Each academy will give high priority to developing effective links and conveying to parents, carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
4. The need to work in partnership with parents and carers is essential and will be the responsibility of each academy to identify, investigate and communicate concerns as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.
5. Leigh Academies Trust is committed to promoting race, disability and gender equality within all practices and procedures related to attendance and punctuality.
6. It is only the Principal(s) of each academy in the Trust who can authorise absence.

### 2.0 Principles

#### **Each academy will:**

1. Ensure that all staff are aware of the Roll Call / Registration procedures and receive appropriate professional development with regard to these.
2. Complete Roll Call accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, including registration during every lesson of the day.
3. Stress to parents / carers the importance of contacting the academy on the first day of absence, and provide effective mechanisms for them to contact the academy.
4. Promote the importance that full attendance and punctuality play in achieving the best possible educational outcomes.
5. Through consultation days and reporting systems, ensure that parents, carers and students are made aware of the attendance pattern and provide an opportunity to discuss how it may affect learning and offer supportive strategies to improve attendance.
6. Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued.
7. Support students who have difficulty accessing education through the work of the academy support, Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer and Local authority, Early Help, Schools Liaison Officer/Attendance service.
8. Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.

**Student will:**

1. The academy minimum expected attendance for each and every student is 98%. This is referred to throughout this policy as “regular attendance”.
2. Excellent punctuality is also an expectation of students. Being punctual each and every day prepares students well for the world of work and later life. All students are expected to;
  - Be in school by 8.40am.
  - Attend tutor time and all lessons on time.
  - Be punctual to all other events. Trips and activities, they take part in and that are linked to the school.
  - In exceptional cases where a student has a diagnosed medical condition/need, the condition/need is supported by an up to date diagnosis, and the specific condition/need is known to impact the student’s ability to attend school we will make reasonable adjustments to the application of this policy/attendance processes.
  - Where evidence is not forthcoming or there is no clinical professional’s support for the need for absence no adjustments can/will be made.
  - Please refer to the Student Behaviour Policy for sanctions with regards lateness to school.

**Parents / Carers will:**

1. Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.
2. Contact the school whenever the student is absent on the first day and on each day after, of absence. 3. Provide proof of medical appointments and medical treatment for any medical appointment during the Academy day.
4. Avoid removing their child during the academy day. For any absence of this nature prior approval must be granted. If prior approval has not been granted then the absence will be unauthorised.

**3.0 Procedures for recording attendance, absence and punctuality**

1. The statutory recording of attendance and absence at the start of each session is known as Roll Call. This is undertaken within the first 30 minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions. 2. Wherever possible this Roll Call is taken ‘electronically’ by register calling or via biometric system. 3. The recording of attendance and absence to all other lessons will be known as Registration. 4. Only designated staff will undertake the recording of attendance and absence. Staff will be reminded of their legal duty to complete and submit Roll Call at the appropriate time using the correct registration codes. No student will undertake the process at any stage.
5. Parents/Carers and students should be aware of the academy times to ensure punctuality. These can be found on the academy website. Students must be onsite by 8.40am each morning ready for lineup at 8.45am.
6. Registers for Roll Call will officially close 45 minutes after the start of the am/pm session. After this time the students will be registered as late.
7. Students regularly arriving to school late twice in a Module will incur appropriate sanctions. In the first instance this will be a same day centralised detention. If lateness persists the Parents/Carers will be contacted to discuss the matter further.
8. The Academy will provide a dedicated telephone recording facility to enable parents / carers to effectively communicate an absence. Parents can access this by calling 01732 500600. 9. When a student is sick whilst at the academy, they are to report to the relevant College/Small school administration office or other authorised staff within the academy who will contact Parents/Carers to confirm that the student may leave the academy site.
10. Prior to leaving the academy site, all students must report to reception and be officially signed out. If Parents/Carers are unable to collect their child and they are of secondary school age, and have given verbal permission for the student to leave the academy, they will be issued with an exit pass which confirms the student has permission to leave the site. This requires the Parents/Carers to contact the relevant administration office as soon as the student arrives home.
11. Post 16 students who wish to leave the site during the Academy day must adhere to the signing out procedures determined by the Director of Learning for Post 16.

#### **4.0 Strategies for improving attendance and punctuality**

1. The person responsible for leading attendance in each academy will meet regularly with relevant staff and make them aware of significant attendance trends and patterns and seek their support to address any issues with students, parents / carers and other stakeholders. This may include Student Services or pastoral staff, tutors, Directors of Learning, College Leadership teams, Trust AWO and other staff as appropriate. At Leigh Academy Tonbridge this is facilitated in weekly college meetings for Lyceum and Delphi staff to attend.
2. Attendance, punctuality and its impact on learning and progress will be a key area for discussion between tutors, Student Services, College Leadership teams and parents / carers during consultation days.
3. A range of positive strategies will be used to reward individual students and groups for outstanding and/or improved attendance. These rewards will include achievement points, reward breakfasts, recognition in celebration assemblies and opportunities for trips and visits.
4. Student attendance data may be shared with Parents/Carers, Local Authority, Early Help, School Liaison Officer/Attendance Service, Children's Social Services, Police, relevant LEA's, Ofsted and the DfE.
5. A student is deemed to be a PA (Persistent Absentee) if their attendance falls below 90%. An academy will consider students below 95% at risk. Students who fall into either of these categories, will be monitored by the academy attendance teams and the Trust Attendance Officer.
6. Analysis of trends and attendance by micro population should identify strengths and areas for intervention to further improve attendance. At Leigh Academy Tonbridge this data is analysed weekly in college meetings.
7. A referral may be made to the local authority attendance service should attendance remain poor after academy and Trust interventions.

#### **Education for Health Needs including Mental Health'**

The school will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult to cope with due to their mental health issues.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where a member of staff has a mental health concern about a student that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

In order to support parents with their child's progress, the school will liaise with parents openly and honestly in a sensitive manner where mental health concerns have been identified in relation to absence.

If a student is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their mental health issues, the school will:

- Liaise with any agencies working with the pupil.
- If felt appropriate, a referral will be put into the Single Point of Access (SPOA) to request support.
- Liaise regularly with parents/carers and the pupil.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will implement an action plan in conjunction with the parents/carers and the student to support with any stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. The plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the student is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of students with mental health issues, the school will consider:

- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.
- A 'Time Out Card', which allows a pupil to request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time away from a situation they are finding difficult.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

## **5.0 Absence during term time**

1. The academy may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. These could include: service personnel returning from tour of duty, absence recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or the child's rehabilitation, the death or terminal illness of a person close to the family, to attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family. (Ref KCC Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct, effective from April 2017, Medway Council Code of Practice dated 1st September 2014, Royal Borough of Greenwich unauthorised absence code).
2. Applications for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Principal of the Academy. The Principal of the Academy will make the decision of acceptance or refusal. The academy can consider the student's previous record of attendance into account. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.
3. If absence is not authorised and the leave of absence of at least 10 sessions (5 days) is taken, a referral will be made to the local authority attendance service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of the academy.

## **6.0 Penalty Notices**

1. Currently local authorities have different penalty notice codes. This is likely to be streamlined nationally in the near future.
2. Leigh Academies Trust academies are under the auspices of Kent County Council, Medway Council and Royal Borough of Greenwich. At Leigh Academy Tonbridge we work with Kent County Council.
3. In line with KCC Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct, Medway Council Code of Practice and Royal Borough of Greenwich Unauthorised Absences Code, academies follow set procedures for issuing penalty notices.
4. Local authority Attendance Services take responsibility for issuing Penalty notices and taking other legal actions following referral by the academy.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- Unauthorised absence:
- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence.
- Parents/Carers and students are supported by the academy and local authority to overcome barriers to regular attendance.
- Sanctions of any nature are used where parental cooperation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem.
- A penalty notice can only be issued as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that its use will secure improvement.
- A penalty notice can only be issued where a student has been absent or late for a period/periods of time and the absence or lateness has not been authorised by the academy.

- After the academy has taken steps to resolve attendance concerns/warned the parent/carer of a possible Penalty Notice referral, the academy will refer directly to the relevant local authority, to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence:
- absent for 10 or more half day sessions without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions (these do not need to be consecutive)
  - persistently late for up to 10 sessions after register has closed (15 minutes)
  - unauthorised absence for any public examination of which dates have been published in advance - unauthorised absence for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance
  - unless the issuing of the Penalty notice in these circumstances would conflict with other interventions in place such as Early Help.

Exclusion:

- A penalty notice can only be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours of days 1-5 of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.
- Where penalty notices are imposed, local authority regulations will apply. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

### **Removing a pupil from the school roll**

As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from academy roll due to continued serious absence.

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll.

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll.

### **7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. Academy attendance data will be published for consideration at every academy board meeting and module reviews as requested. It may also be submitted to the Trust Academies Standards Committee as required.
2. The Principal has responsibility for the attendance figures and actions to improve attendance within their academy.
3. The Head of each college/small school has responsibility for the attendance figures and actions to improve attendance within their college.
4. Attendance Data will be produced regularly and distributed to the senior leadership team and college/small school teams to enable interventions to occur.
5. A designated senior leader has overall responsibility for the publication and monitoring of the attendance data for the whole academy.
6. Attendance data will be collected via the DfE Census three times per annum.