



## Ascend Learning Trust Attendance Policy

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### Related Policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Medical Needs

### Appendices

- A. Absence from School during Term Time
- B. B School Specific Attendance Flow Chart

### Relevant Legislation:

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and draws from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and we have high attendance expectations for all pupils, we will ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently whilst considering the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In implementing this policy, we will take into consideration our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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- I. The mission of the Ascend Learning Trust is to have the highest possible aspirations, achieve the highest standards, provide the best possible teaching and learning, and to encourage the expectations of behaviour and personal conduct that are expressed within the Trust’s contract. For the Trust to achieve this, it is vital that our pupils attend regularly and on time. Where the reason for absence is unavoidable, this must be communicated to the relevant Academy.
  
- II. The Ascend Learning Trust supports the principles enshrined in Articles 28 (right to education) and 29 (goals of education) of UNICEF’s Rights of the Child Charter. The Trust endorses the position that: **‘Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment’.**
  
- III. The Ascend Learning Trust Attendance Policy adheres to the non-statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities published in the ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ DfE document, May 2022. The core of this guidance is that strong attendance is built upon effective relationships between schools and families so that potential barriers to attendance are removed collaboratively.

## 1. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

- I. The Education and Standards Committee has oversight of the effective operation of this policy in each academy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework.
- II. Teachers and the delegated members of staff have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy.
- III. Parents/carers and pupils have the responsibility to ensure they are aware of this policy and the procedures to be followed in cases of absence.

## 2. Quick Reference Contacts Guide

	Name	Contact Details
Attendance Lead	Claire Fisher	<a href="mailto:cfisher@rwba.org.uk">cfisher@rwba.org.uk</a> 01793 841958
Head teacher	Anita Ellis	<a href="mailto:Aellis@rwba.org.uk">Aellis@rwba.org.uk</a> 01793 841900
DSL	Mari Roberts	<a href="mailto:mroberts@rwba.org.uk">mroberts@rwba.org.uk</a> 01793 841907

## 3. LATENESS

- I. Poor punctuality is unacceptable. A pupil who misses the start of the day, misses vital tutorial time and preparation for the day ahead and may not get their registration mark. Arriving late to lessons is also disruptive to learning and teaching and, again, the pupil may miss important explanations, instructions or tasks which prevent them from understanding the lesson objectives and making good progress in the lesson. This will be addressed in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- II. The Academy day begin at (8.40am) and all pupils are expected to be in ilearn by that time

- III. The AM register is electronically taken by (8:40am) and pupils will be marked as Late if they are not in registration by this time. There are sanctions associated with this and Behaviour for Learning Policies should be referred to for further advice and guidance.
- IV. The AM register is closed at (9.10am). In accordance with the regulations on attendance, any pupil arriving after this time will receive a mark to indicate they are on the Academy site, but this mark may not count as a present mark and may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Parents/carers face the possibility of a penalty notice if this becomes a persistent problem.
- V. The PM register is electronically taken at the start of the afternoon session (2:00pm) and pupils will be marked as Late if they are not present by this time. There are sanctions associated with this and Behaviour for Learning Policies should be referred to for further advice and guidance.
- VI. If parents/carers are experiencing difficulty in getting their child to school, they should contact the Academy in order that a member of staff can assist and support them. The Academy's Pastoral Teams, Attendance Officer or Senior Leader will request to meet with the parent/carer if the Academy recognises that there is a problem with persistent lateness.

#### **4. IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

- I. A pupil's regular attendance is the legal responsibility of parents/carers and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- II. Any absence during term time affects the continuity of a child's schooling and more frequent absence seriously affects their learning. An attendance rate at school of 95% sounds good, but this equates to missing 10 school days during the academic year, or 50 lessons in total. If a child has 95% attendance over five years from Year 7 to 11, this means they will have missed 50 school days and 250 hours of teaching and learning time.

#### **5. PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

- I. Encouraging and supporting good attendance is everyone's responsibility including parents, pupils and all Academy staff. The Trust and its Academies may do this by some or all of the following strategies:

- a. Progress Check Reports throughout the year;
- b. Tutor monitoring of iLearn/Tutor Group attendance, communicate successes and address concerns.
- c. Termly positive communications for pupils with 96%+ attendance;
- d. Termly positive communications for pupils with 100% attendance;
- e. Reward trips and activities for good attendance.

## 6. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

- I. Each Academy is required by law to record each half-day of absence as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.
- II. Reasons such as illness or medical/dental appointment are considered reasonable to warrant an authorised absence from the Academy, which fall unavoidably in school time.
- III. Unauthorised absences are those which the Academy does not consider reasonable and no "leave" has been granted. This includes:
  - a. Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
  - b. Truancy from school
  - c. No reason yet provided for absence
  - d. Unauthorised absence
  - e. Pupils who arrive late (after registers are closed)
- IV. The Trust actively seeks to support parents/carers where a child's 'illness' is becoming a mask for reluctance to attend school. If a child is becoming reluctant to attend school, parents/carers are encouraged to contact the relevant Head of Year/Pastoral Manager at their Academy for support. Rather than give in to pressure to excuse their child from attending school, parents/carers can discuss their concerns with the Pastoral Teams to find a way forward.
- V. Pupils with medical needs may require additional support with maintaining regular and punctual attendance. Parents/carers should contact the relevant Pastoral Team at their school for support. Each school within the trust has a nominated member of staff responsible for recording and monitoring all medical needs in a central database.

## 7. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

- I. Pupils who have an absence rate of 10% or more across the academic year, or who have an absence rate of 10% or more in any six-week period, regardless of the reason, are categorised as a 'persistent absentee' (PA). Each Academy monitors and tracks absenteeism meticulously. However, any pupil identified as having been absent for 10% of the school time or is at risk of moving towards that figure, will be treated as a priority and parents/carers will be notified of this immediately and the Attendance Officer informed.
- II. Identified PA pupils and parents are given an individual action plan to support and assist in meeting their needs in improving their attendance. The action plan may include a reduced or revised timetable, a mentor, individual incentives or the involvement of the Education Welfare Service. The devising of the action plan may involve a School Attendance Meeting.

## 8. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If a child is absent from school, their parent/carer must email [abs@rwba.org.uk](mailto:abs@rwba.org.uk):

- a. Contact the Academy on the first day of absence, stating a reason for the absence;
- b. Contact the Academy on each subsequent day of absence; and

When a pupil is absent, their Academy will:

- a. The Academy will monitor and record absences daily, by 9.10am. An Intouch communication will be sent to parents/carers if they have not been in contact with the Academy;
- b. Implement the Trust graduated intervention model when a pupil's attendance begins to cause concern, as detailed below:
  - a. If a pupil is absent for 2 consecutive days, the school (Tutor) will contact home to discuss the cause of absence and identify any required support;
  - b. If attendance falls below 96%, the school (Pastoral team) will send an attendance awareness letter reminding parents and carers of their duty to support strong attendance triggers attendance letter one, which is an attendance awareness letter;
  - c. If attendance falls below 92%, the school will send a letter informing parents/carers that they may be required to attend a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) if their child's attendance does not improve immediately;

- d If attendance falls below 90%. parents will be invited to a School Attendance Meeting. These meetings may be held via telephone, Teams or in person, as circumstances dictate, and will be led by your child's pastoral team. During that meeting, an individual action plan will be agreed to establish a clear strategy to improving the child's attendance;
- e If no further improvement using the above criteria, the school will inform the local authority and engage the services of the Education Welfare Services. At this stage, it is possible that legal action will be pursued to secure an improvement in attendance.

## 9. PARENT/CARER CONTACT DETAILS

- I. To ensure each Academy can contact pupils' parents/carers quickly and efficiently, a data collection sheet is sent to parents/carers at the start of each academic year for completion and prompt return.
- II. If there are any changes to your contact details during the year, parents/carers must notify the Academy immediately in order to ensure that the Academy's records are up to date.

## 10. ROLE OF EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

- I. The Trust values working in close partnership with parents/carers and encourages them to get in contact at an early stage to resolve any attendance problems which are becoming apparent. Working in this way is very effective and ensures a high level of success. However, if, more focused intervention is required, as detailed above, a pupil will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.
- II. The Education Welfare Service will work in partnership with the parent/carer/Academy. It should be noted that if unauthorised absence persists, and other methods of intervention have been unsuccessful, the Head Teacher or authorised senior member of staff may instruct the relevant authorities to:
  - a. Issue Penalty Notices; and/or
  - b. Progress a case to prosecution in the Magistrates Court as it is a legal obligation of the parent/carer to ensure regular attendance of the child at school.

## 11. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

- I. There is no legal entitlement for parents/carers to take their children out of school for holidays during term time. The Trust and each Academy expect support from parents/carers by not taking their children out of school during term time.
- II. Academies will only consider holidays in term time in exceptional circumstances. With exceptional circumstances in mind, any such holiday requests must be made no less than one month prior to the holiday. Any requests should be marked for the attention of the Academy Head Teacher.
- III. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional and permission to take a term-time holiday is not granted by the Head Teacher, but the holiday is still taken, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the relevant Local Authority.

## 12. PENALTY NOTICES

- I. Following a period of unauthorised or persistent absence, any parent/carer may be considered for a penalty notice. This is issued through the courts to both parents/carers and any fine is paid to the relevant Local Authority.