



Armthorpe Academy

Attendance Policy

(Students)



THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK:

Under the Education Act (1999), parent/carers are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend the school regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence under this Act.

The DfE 'Advice on 'School Attendance' (November 2013) and School Attendance Parental Responsibility measures (January 2015) have been consulted in addition to Doncaster Council's Code of Conduct for Education Penalty Notices before reviewing this policy.

At Armthorpe Academy, we believe that good attendance is vital for all students if they are to gain the most from the education we provide. There are clearly documented links between regular attendance and achievement.

We expect parent/carers to assist us in raising attendance levels throughout the school by:

- Ensuring the regular attendance of their child;
- Contacting the school every day when their child is absent from school;
- Providing a valid reason for the absence;
- Attending any meetings about their child's attendance, and implementing the actions discussed.

The statutory guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016) sets out the key principles to enable local authorities in England to implement their legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as possible to do so, children missing education (CME).

Local authorities have a duty of care under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them. The Academy must report attendance daily regarding Children in Care.

RATIONALE:

The Academy believes that regular attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and becoming emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults, who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

The Academy will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the Academy community feels safe and valued.

The Academy staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends the Academy regularly and punctually.

The Academy will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Armthorpe Academy recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole Academy community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of Academy improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

The Academy will adhere to children missing education procedures to ensure all children are safe and accessing appropriate education.

OBJECTIVES:

- To improve the overall attendance of students at the Academy;
- To reduce the number of persistent absentees and those students on track to become persistent absentees;
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the Academy including students, parent/carers, staff and governors;
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks;
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students;
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data;
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and the Academy;
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions, which includes students with attendance below 97% being unable to participate in rewards trips and activities;
- To promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority's School Attendance Core Service and other external agencies;
- To ensure robust procedures are in place to monitor and report attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after. Armthorpe Academy supports this by sharing attendance data daily with the local authority officer responsible for Children in Care in accordance with The Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014.

Each year, a number of students from every year group achieve 100% attendance, which emphasises that this is an achievable target. Some students achieve this level of attendance year upon year. Absence during term time, for any reason, interrupts a student's education and risks disrupting their educational progress.

- Students should aim for 100% attendance;
- The Department for Education state that good attendance is 97% or better;
- 90% attendance means a student is missing the equivalent of half a day of education every week. During their time at Armthorpe Academy a student maintaining an attendance rate of 90% will have lost half a years' education;
- Students whose attendance is 90% and below are classed as Persistent Absentees

PRACTICE:

Morning Registration will close at 08:45am. Students arriving late to the Academy after 08:45am, must sign in at Reception, giving their reasons for the lateness.

When a student is absent:

Parents/carers must phone the Academy before 8:25am to report that their child will be absent from school and to provide the reason for their absence. If the child is absent for a number of days, parent/carers must phone the Academy every morning to provide an update.

If a child does not arrive at school, and the Academy has not been informed of their absence, a text message alert will be sent asking the parent/carer to contact the Academy to explain the reason for the child's absence. If there is no response to this message, if appropriate or necessary, members of staff will complete a home visit.

All absence will be treated as unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

'Exceptional circumstances' include:

- Illness of pupil;
- Representative event (for example sport, music or school);
- Religious observance;
- Family bereavement (immediate family);
- Family crisis.

'Exceptional circumstances' do not include:

- Looking after siblings;
- Birthday or other celebrations;
- Shopping;
- Attendance at local events;
- Holidays.

'Exceptional circumstances' and the decision to authorise an absence are at the discretion of the Principal. A student's attendance record will be taken into account when deciding whether an absence will be authorised or not.

Children Missing Education

(It is important to note that any Safeguarding concerns regarding the immediate safety or well-being of a child need to be referred immediately to Social Care and the Police if appropriate).

When the Academy suspect they have a missing student the following procedure must take place.

- From the first day of absence and up to the 10th school day of absence the Academy must make initial enquires to locate the student, Student Welfare Managers may conduct home visits to support this action;
- If the Academy have not been able to confirm the location of the student by the 11th school day of absence they must complete a Child Missing Education report to Doncaster Council's attendance and pupil welfare service.

Responsibilities:

The Academy will:

- Contact parent/carers on the first day if there is an unexplained absence;
- Consult parent/carers if attendance drops below 97%;
- Encourage punctuality and good attendance as part of safeguarding practice;
- Discuss with parent/carers any problems with attendance and punctuality;
- Liaise with the LA over specific attendance issues where necessary;
- Develop clear procedures to enable students to attend school;
- Support families to improve their child's attendance where necessary;
- Refer students with poor attendance to the Local Authority for additional support where necessary;

- Ensure that all students and parent/carers understand the issues and procedures for attendance;
- Ensure that all staff (including administrative, support, non-teaching staff and governors) understand the issues and procedures for registration and attendance;
- Determine the correct absence code following Department for Education guidelines;
- Closely monitor students on personalised timetables based on individual needs;
- Use attendance records when writing references for future employers, colleges and universities;
- Report any students at risk of CME following Doncaster Missing Education guidance;
- Robustly monitor students who are CIC and report on a daily basis.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

The Assistant Principal (Student Progress) is the Senior Leader within the Academy with responsibility for securing good attendance for students by:

- Writing and amending policies linked to attendance;
- Ensuring the monitoring and implementation of the agreed policy and procedures;
- Line Managing the Attendance Improvement Officer;
- Ensuring that appropriate attendance training for staff is provided;
- Ensuring regular celebrations of good attendance take place;
- Ensuring that governors are provided with key information regarding whole school and vulnerable cohort's attendance by providing data, analysis and commentary;
- Being available, if appropriate, for parent/carers who may wish to discuss specific problems or in-school difficulties which their child is experiencing. Appointments can be made by contacting Reception.

The Governors:

The Governing Body will promote good attendance of students by:

- Providing support and challenge to senior leaders linked to attendance;
- Reviewing and scrutinising the impact of leaders' work against the Academy Development Plan;
- Interpreting attendance information and reports, and use this to review performance;
- Attending appropriate training to help them to understand the duty of the Academy to promote good attendance;
- Ratifying the Academy Attendance Policy.

The Attendance Improvement Officer will:

The Attendance Improvement Officer has a very important role to play in the Academy's framework for promoting good attendance by:

- Monitoring attendance and absence patterns on a daily and weekly basis;
- Provide Senior Leaders, Student Welfare Managers and the SENCo with attendance information on a weekly basis;
- Meeting with students and parent/carers, where students are developing, or have developed, patterns of absence and agreeing actions which may lead to the student's attendance improving;
- Working with Student Welfare Managers to support students and parent/carers when required
- Ensuring that there are clearly understood attendance procedures in place;
- Agreeing attendance action plans with students and parent/carers where there is a cause for concern;
- Working with the LA Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service, including through legal enforcement;
- Recognising and celebrating the good attendance of students in assemblies, through tutor groups and at an individual level;

- Conduct home visits as and when appropriate or necessary.
- Analyse attendance data for trends and identify students at risk;

Class Teachers/ Form Tutors will:

- Ensure that an accurate and timely register is taken each lesson, including an AM and PM registration;
- Publically praising those students who attend well, or make an effort to improve their attendance;
- Using SIMs to record absences with the 'N' code for the Administrative Assistant (attendance) to then input the correct code;
- Refer unexplained absences or patterns of absence to the Attendance Improvement Officer and relevant Student Welfare Manager;
- Place students on 'late report' and monitor the impact of this, in discussion with the relevant Student Welfare Manager;
- Welcome students back after they have been absent because of illness;
- Take specific steps to assist children returning to school when they have been absent;
- Provide a positive role model through their own attendance and punctuality.

The Administrative Assistant (Attendance) will:

- Contact external providers, dual registered placements and Alternative Provision to obtain attendance information for students;
- Update records with information received from parents/carers regarding their child's attendance;
- Begin first day contact by 9am each day to establish where a student is if not in the Academy as expected each day;
- Produce attendance certificates;
- Keep an accurate register on SIMs, chase missing marks and incomplete registers;
- Make routine phone calls to parent/carers and send out standard letters to parents/carers about their child's attendance;
- Support the EWO and Attendance Improvement Officer through the stages of the legal process for irregular school attendance;
- Support EWO and the Attendance Improvement Officer to refer students via Children Missing Education process;
- Report daily attendance regarding Children in Care.

Parent/Carers will:

- Inform school by telephone on the first morning of any absence before 8.25am;
- Contact the school every morning before 8.25am whilst absence continues;
- Provide a note to cover the absence on the child's return to school, including medical evidence;
- Wherever possible, will make medical/dental appointments for their child out of school hours and if this cannot be avoided, they should aim for them to be as late in the afternoon as possible;
- Ensure that their child gets to school on time;
- Ensure that their child catches up on missed work to avoid gaps in knowledge;
- Not take family holidays during term time (see further guidance below);
- Attend meetings in school regarding attendance as requested.

What happens if my child does not attend school regularly?

- The Academy will contact you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to offer any support that may be required. A referral could be made to the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service if attendance continues to be a concern;
- Doncaster Council will use legislation to enforce attendance at school where parent/carers do not fulfil their duty to ensure their children attend school regularly. This could mean that a parent or carer enters into the Local Authority Enforcement Procedure which may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court;
- A parent or carer could receive a Parenting order, A Community Order, a Curfew Order and/or a fine of up to £2500;
- A parent or carer can also be issued with an Education Penalty Notice (EPN) for any unauthorised absences, including taking an unauthorised holiday in term time.

Students will:

- Aim for 100% attendance, only being absent through genuine illness;
- Be on the school site by 8.25am each morning;
- Attend all lessons, answering their name clearly in the register;
- Students on a personalised timetable that includes attendance to offsite and alternative provision must ensure that they attend regularly in line with the expectations of their timetable.

Holidays in term time:

In line with the government's new legislation, effective from 1st September 2013, no requests for holidays can be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. For the Academy to consider exceptional circumstances, parents must submit a letter to the Principal requesting the absence, a minimum of four weeks before the holiday, before booking the holiday. For the Academy to consider this, the request must be put in writing together with any supporting evidence. All holidays are classed as unauthorised, unless you receive confirmation in writing from the Academy that the holiday has been authorised. There are no exceptions.

All holidays that are unauthorised will be referred to the Local Authority to issue an Education Penalty Notice (EPN). When an EPN is issued, the penalty is £60 per child, per parent/carer when the payment is made within 21 days. After this date, the penalty doubles to £120 per child, per parent/carer if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that the parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Please note that a separate EPN will be issued to each parent for each child, and all monies are payable to the Local Authority.

NB: As of 1st September 2018, we have amended our rewards and attendance policy. Students will be recognised and rewarded for excellent attendance, but if a child misses any school due to a holiday, we reserve the right to remove eligibility for participation in any rewards activities, trips or visits for a period of 12 months following the holiday. At KS4, this means that we reserve the right for students to not be allowed to attend the end of Year 11 Prom, if they have missed school due to a holiday in the 12 months beforehand.

The law says that parent/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances. If you take your child on holidays during term time without the school's authorisation, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will result in parent/carers being issued with an Education Penalty Notice.

Why shouldn't I take my child on holiday during term time?

Many parents and carers think it is okay to go on holiday during term time; this has a negative effect on their children's learning and ability to achieve.

If your child goes on holiday during term time:

- 10 days absence = 95% attendance
- 19 days absence = 90% attendance
- 29 days absence = 85% attendance
- 38 days absence = 80% attendance
- 47 days absence = 75% attendance

Students with attendance which is 95% or higher are more likely to achieve good grades in their GCSE examinations.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

No reason yet given (N) : until a reason is obtained, a student's absence is temporarily recorded as an (N). The attendance office will work to ensure that these (N) codes are reconciled after a maximum period of two weeks. Those that remain un-reconciled are converted to (O) – unauthorised absence.

Illness (I) : in most cases, a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the Academy that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents/carers will be expected to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription, etc.

Medical / Dental Appointments (M) : parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the Academy day. Where this is not possible, students should attend the Academy for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to the Academy.

Approved Sporting Activity (P) : this code is used for those students taking part in a sporting activity supervised by a person authorised by the Principal.

Interview (J) : this code is used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or for a place at a further or higher educational establishment (Year 11 students only).

Educated off site (B) : this code is used for all students, including Traveller children, who are present at educational provision which is not in a school.

Dual registration (D) : this code is used when a student is dually registered at two schools and, for the session in question, they are not required to attend Armthorpe Academy.

Other Authorised Circumstances (C) : this relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example, family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison, or a part-time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Educational Visit or Trip (V) : this code is used for students attending an approved educational activity.

Excluded (no alternative provision made) (E) : exclusion from attending the Academy is counted as an authorised absence. The student's Student Welfare Manager will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Family Holidays (H) Extended Leave (F) and Family Holiday (Not agreed or in excess of agreement) (G): parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to remove their child from the Academy during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 academy days, they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. Holidays will not be authorised unless they fall under exceptional circumstances.

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted, the letter should state:

- The expected date of return;
- That parent/carers must contact the Academy should any delays occur;
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family does not return as expected.

If a student fails to return and contact with the parent/carer has not been made or received, the Academy may take the student off the Academy's roll in compliance with the Education (Student Registration, England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their Academy place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised **(G)**. In such cases, the Academy may issue an Education Penalty Notice (EPN).

Religious Observance (R) : Armthorpe Academy acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals, may fall outside the Academy holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to allow their child not to attend the Academy on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parent/carers are requested to give advance notice to the Academy if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the Academy and limiting the authorised absence rate of the Academy, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Study Leave (S) : study leave may be granted for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations.

Forced Closure (Y) : this code is used when students are unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances or are not attending because the students have a different school year to other students in the Academy.

Students not on roll (Z) : this code is used for students not registered at the Academy at that time, i.e. before their admission date.

School closed to students (#) : this code is used for planned closures.

Traveller Absence (T) : the aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend the Academy as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending the Academy as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at the Academy.

When in or around Armthorpe, if a family can reasonably travel back to their school base (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

Armthorpe Academy will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school. In such cases, the student's place at Armthorpe Academy will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Armthorpe Academy can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaging in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen;
- Inform the Academy regarding proposed return dates.

Armthorpe Academy will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school;
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service;
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student.

Late Arrivals: Lesson one begins at 08:30; students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (**L**) by all Teachers and Form Tutors. Any student who has on-going late (L) marks will be subject to a Form Tutor's Report. Continued Late Marks will be referred to the Student Welfare Manager for investigation.

On arrival after the close of the register, students must report to Reception to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in the Academy.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Unauthorised absence (O) : absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Academy.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday;
- Shopping for uniform;
- Having their hair cut;
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes;
- "Couldn't get up";
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend the Academy;
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the Academy.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration – England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The Academy is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order;
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority;
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age;
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed;
- Death of a student;
- Transfer between schools;
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system;
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the Academy and the Local Authority have tried to locate the student;
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the Academy before ending compulsory school age;
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with the Youth Offending Team);
- 20 days continuous absence and both the Local Authority and the Academy have tried to locate the student;
- Left the Academy but not known where he/she has gone after both the Academy and the Local Authority have tried to locate the student.

POLICY INTRODUCED: December 2013

UPDATED POLICY DRAFTED: September 2018
Amendment November 2018

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS: 17th October 2018

DATE OF REVIEW: