



Armthorpe
Academy
Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

Attendance Policy

September 2023

Date of approval:	November 2023
Approved by:	LAB
Date of next review:	Review Autumn 2024



Consilium
Academies

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1. 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' (August 2020) 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 consistency in the approach to remote learning for pupils who aren't in school
- 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.
- 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

4. 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 or email (ARM-attendance@consilium-at.com) 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 inform 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 Headteacher. A student's attendance record will be taken into account when deciding whether an absence will be authorised or not.

5. 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, members of the pastoral and safeguarding team 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.

6. 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 Deputy Head (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 Officer will:

The Attendance 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, Heads of Year 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 Heads of Year 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;
- 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;
- 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;

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;
- Refer unexplained absences or patterns of absence to the Attendance Improvement Officer and relevant Head of Year;
- Place students on 'late report' and monitor the impact of this, in discussion with the relevant Head of Year;

- 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.

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.

7. Holidays, special occasions and exceptional circumstances

We believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. For this reason, as a general rule, we do not authorise leave of absence (including holidays) in term time.

The Headteacher has the discretion to make exceptions to this rule and authorise leave of absence for special circumstance (Using Code 'H': Family Holiday Agreed).

Special circumstances may include:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the student's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

The national guidance suggests that requests for the following reasons should not be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holidays.
- Availability of desired accommodation.
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

If the school knows that the student has siblings in other schools, it is advisable to make contact with the other school to come to an agreement when coding the leave of absence (i.e. whether the leave of absence is authorised or unauthorised).

If a parent/carers wishes to apply for a leave of absence under exceptional circumstances, they must write to the Headteacher explaining the reasons and giving the Headteacher time to carefully consider the application. It is important to note, that if the Headteacher rejects the application or no application is made, the school is very likely to refer to start Legal proceeding.

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. Unless you receive confirmation in writing from the Academy that the holiday has been authorised, all holidays are classed as unauthorised. There are no exceptions. 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.

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/carers when the payment is made within 21 days. After this date, the penalty doubles to £120 per child, per parent/carers 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/carers 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.

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/carers 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.

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.

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Absence will be categorised as follows using the codes taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Codes	Description	Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Education off site (no Dual reg)	Approval Education Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	In for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend/No mark recorded	No mark	Out for whole session

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.

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.