

Attendance Policy – appendix

East Leake Academy

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1 Introduction

At East Leake Academy we always follow the Diverse Academies Trust policy which can be found following the link below:

<https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2020/03/Attendance.pdf>

The agreed aims of this appendix is to ensure:

- Our students attend every day possible so that they access full learning opportunities. The expectation is that students should maintain an attendance of at least 97%.
- Our parents comply with the parental duty stated under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 for making sure their child of compulsory academy age receives full time education.

Poor attendance has been shown to negatively impact on learning and attainment, not just in the current academy, but also throughout a child's education leading to limited life choices. For our students to fulfil their potential, we have a duty to; encourage, support and enforce good attendance. Whilst we recognise the difficulties and challenges for some families in taking holidays, and as an academy we will seek creative solutions to work together with parents, there is a duty on parents and academies to ensure students access their full entitlement.

In line with Local Authority guidance, the governors at East Leake Academy recognise the necessity of issuing penalty notices, where attendance, particularly where absence is unauthorised, fails to meet those standards expected by the academy (i.e. attendance should not fall below 90% in any 6-week period). The academy year is structured with sufficient holiday breaks across the year, to enable most families to arrange holidays outside of term time.

Our staff and governors commit to providing:

- Students with high quality teaching so they want to attend the academy.
- Students with the knowledge that they need to attend the academy regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities and make good progress.

Where there are concerns about attendance, we address these speedily and rigorously to ensure impact on learning is minimalised.

At East Leake Academy we define attendance concerns where:

- Students take children out of our academy in term time
- Students are absent on individual days whether explained or unexplained
- There is unexplained absence
- Patterns of absence e.g., regular Mondays / Wednesdays

- Medical needs or extenuating circumstances impact on attendance
- Students are persistently late to morning registration

2 Roles and Responsibilities

Governors Role:

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence, must be reported to the governors Local Academy Committee, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

Our East Leake Academy local academy committee's responsibility is to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their academies.

The academy's attendance figures are presented to the Local Academy Committee on a termly basis:

- Agree that the academy follows the trust overarching policy adhering to national guidance
- Agreeing the academy appendix, which enables the academy to secure attendance which is at least in line with government and local expectations
- To promote the importance of good attendance throughout the academy and local community
- To support the Academy Principal, where applicable, to make joint decisions

Academy Principal's Role:

- Ensuring parents and carers are informed about the academy attendance policy
- Working with the Assistant Principal overseeing attendance to develop strategies to improve attendance
- Outlining the importance of maximum attendance to parents at every opportunity at new parents' meetings, open evenings and newsletters
- Outlining to parents the procedure for notifying the academy about students' absences
- Supporting the Designated Safeguarding Lead in investigating absence where related to safeguarding or wellbeing concerns
- Liaising with staff to work with families to improve student attendance
- Enforcing attendance procedures rigorously, including requesting for penalty notices to be issued where appropriate
- Analysing attendance for vulnerable groups with the Attendance Lead.

Academy Lead's Role

- To attend the attendance network meetings and work with the Academy Principal to develop strategies to improve attendance
- Work closely with the Attendance Officer to monitor any student concerns
- To refer to class teacher, SENDCO or Academy Principal where absence may be due to medical needs or welfare issues
- To report attendance weekly, half termly, termly and annually to the Academy Principal
- To send letters in response to requests as agreed with the Academy Principal

- To send letters confirming referral for a penalty notice
- To analyse patterns in attendance
- To make referrals to the Local Authority i.e., Enforcement, Children Missing in Education, Family Service, Early Help Unit
- To support attendance meetings with Parents/Guardians
- To provide termly reports for the governors Local Academy Committee
- To provide attendance information for end of year reports.

Attendance Officer role:

- To monitor attendance daily for students of concern and record details
- To communicate with parents when students are not in school
- To inform Academy Principal/ Designated Safeguarding Lead where a student with safeguarding issues is absent
- Liaise with the Pastoral Team when there are attendance concerns to ensure students are supported
- To make referrals to the Local Authority
- To hold attendance meetings with Parents/Guardians
- To work with the staff member supporting our ARNA students to ensure students are best supported
- To process attendance letters
- Promote and celebrate good attendance
- Monitor punctuality
- To prepare the attendance certificates

Pastoral Lead, Tutor Role & Classroom Teacher Role:

- To administer registration efficiently and promptly so we can ensure students are safeguarded
- To make it clear to their students that they value maximum attendance
- To encourage punctual arrival at the academy
- To be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence and speak to parents where there are any concerns
- Investigate where absence may be due to issues affecting student welfare e.g., bullying / anxiety / home circumstances and put support in place
- Refer to SENDCO, Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes Lead, Academy Principal of concerns
- To inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, if a child on a protection plan is absent or if there are any concerns whatsoever about the whereabouts of a child
- To discuss attendance with parents at parents evening.

Parents'/Carer Role:

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents and carers are responsible for making sure that their child receives efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs and disabilities they may have, either by regular attendance at the academy or otherwise. Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the academy's Attendance Policy, as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular academy attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our academy staff, all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

Parents must ensure that they:

- Inform the academy of any absence and keep us updated with regards to any prolonged absence. If we are not informed of a reason for absence, this will be considered as unauthorised.
- Make applications for leave in writing on, giving the reason for the request.
- Avoid medical and dental appointments during the academy day. Medical appointments do not normally need a full day; therefore, children should only be absent for the length of the appointment. They should attend the academy before the appointment and return to the academy immediately after.
- Do not take holidays in academy term time.
- Encourage students to arrive at the academy on time each day.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at the academy, they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that they need help in resolving
Talk to their child's form tutor in the first instance to gain the academy support
- Talk to either Louise Trimble (Academy Attendance Officer) ltrimble@eastleake-ac.org.uk or Clare Baxter (Assistant Principal) cbaxter@eastleake-ac.org.uk

Pupils' Role:

- Arrive at the Academy on time
- Attend school every day when possible
- Attend all lessons when in school
- Speak to a member of staff if there are any barriers to you attending school so that we can offer support

Persistent Absence Thresholds

Absence includes holidays, illness, medical appointments and lateness. Students who miss schooling find it will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best potential. We follow the guidance on persistent and severe absence as outlined in section 5 of Working Together.

Process for Monitoring Attendance Sickiness expectations:

- We expect parents to notify the academy by 9:00am on the first day of any absence of their child. Failure to notify the academy, either by phone or Weduc message, on the first day, will lead to the absence being marked as unauthorised.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter, regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the academy with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised, particularly if the child then gives us a contradicting reason for their absence. Your child's current and previous academy attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result, the absence may not be authorised.
- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable at East Leake Academy and may be unauthorised. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip, confirming your visit, or prescription.
- The Academy may decide to send a letter requesting medical evidence, when there has been no reason given and/or the absence has been 3.5 days or longer.
- If a child is absent from school for 5 days or more, we may conduct a home visit. This might be done for any absences of children who are open to social care or who are deemed vulnerable.
- Persistent absence due to illness may result in a referral to the School Nursing Team.

Lateness expectations:

At East Leake Academy we believe that punctuality is an important life skill.

- Our students must be on time each day.
- Lateness will be monitored by their Tutor, Head of Year and Attendance Officer.
- If the arrival at the academy is after the registers have closed, the student will receive an 'L'
- More than 6 unauthorised incidents of arriving late with a 'U' code in a 6-week period, could result in a penalty fine.

- If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M' if we have seen proof of the appointment.

Promoting Good Attendance:

We educate and inform our students on the importance of good attendance and punctuality in the hope that it supports better decisions. We also recognise and celebrate good attendance when appropriate; including improvements over time.

Mental Health, Anxiety and attendance:

At East Leake academy, we recognise that there has been a significant increase in mental health concerns amongst young people. We fully acknowledge that some students' attendance will be impacted by both poor mental health and anxiety and we have support in place to help students overcome these barriers.

Evidence shows that one of the best ways to encourage positive mental health is through consistent routines and expectations which is why we will always insist of students attending full time education as regularly as possible.

At East Leake Academy, we have the following support in place to help students who are facing barriers to attendance as a result of mental health or anxiety concerns:

- Pastoral programme that educates and supports positive mental health
- Education around anxiety and coping strategies within the pastoral curriculum
- Support from Pastoral Leads
- Student counsellor – Mrs Glover mglover@eastleake-ac.org.uk
- ARNA (Anxiety Related Non Attendance) support – Miss Elliott selliott@eastleake-ac.org.uk
- Anxiety workshops within the school day
- Two mental Health Leads – Mrs Baxter & Mrs Glover