



Appendix to the Attendance Policy

October 2020

Office use

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Associated documents:			
Diverse Academies Attendance Policy Diverse Academies Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy https://dalp.org.uk/about-us/policies/			
Links to:			

The agreed aims of this policy are to:

- **Ensure pupils attend 'every day possible' so that they access full learning opportunities. The expectation is that children should maintain an attendance of at least 96%.**
- **Ensure compliance 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 impact on learning and attainment not just in the current academy but throughout a child's education leading to limited life choices. For our pupils 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 pupils access their full entitlement.

In line with Local Authority guidance, Governors at Thrumpton 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 the majority of families to arrange holidays outside of term time.

The legal requirement is that parents ensure children attend the academy regularly. As such, taking holiday in term time which reduces attendance to below 90% in a 6 week period is deemed by governors not to meet this requirement due to the impact on learning.

Pupils are expected to attend the academy for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the academy has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the academy has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from the academy after a parent's request.

The staff and governors believe that:

- An effective Attendance Policy needs to be supported by parents in partnership with the academy.
- Pupils who are working in a stimulating environment with exciting lessons will want to attend the academy.
- Pupils need to attend the academy regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities provided and make good progress.
- Establishing good patterns of attendance at an early age will support positive attendance throughout the academy. We therefore expect the same commitment from parents of children in the Foundation Stage.
- Special consideration and support needs to be given to pupils where medical needs may impact on attendance. We recognise that certain medical conditions and illnesses can impact on attendance.
- Poor attendance significantly impacts on learning and progress and therefore there needs to be a rigorous and consistent approach where parents go against the academy guidance and expectations.
- Poor attendance and punctuality can be an indication of safeguarding and welfare issues and therefore may need investigation.
- It is important to investigate where poor attendance/punctuality may be due to other issues such as bullying or anxiety
- The Academy Principal retains the right to authorise holidays where there are extenuating or exceptional circumstances and the Academy Principal may bring particular cases to the governing body for a joint decision.

Where there are **concerns** about attendance, this needs to be addressed speedily and rigorously to ensure impact on learning is minimalised.

Concerns in attendance can be defined where:

- Parents take children out of the academy in term time
- Parents take children out of the academy at the start of a term / year or prior to or during KS1/2 test periods
- Pupils are absent on individual days whether explained or unexplained
- There is unexplained absence
- Patterns of absence e.g. regular Mondays / Fridays
- Medical needs or extenuating circumstances impact on attendance

Holidays in term time:

In line with government legislation, Principals are unable to authorise leave for holidays during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** which may be:

- Funeral
- Wedding of immediate relative
- Holidays which have to be taken in term time due to the circumstances of the child/family (e.g. medical needs) *N.B. this does not include parental job leave / flight availability*
- A request for a holiday in term time must be written to the Principal at the earliest convenience, the letter must state dates of absence and any circumstances you feel are extenuating
- Parents will be informed within 7 academy days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- There are approximately 190 academy days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of academy holidays. This is over 13 academy weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

Penalty notices

In line with guidance provided by Nottinghamshire, the Governing Body at Thrumpton Primary have decided that a **referral for a penalty notice could** be made in the following circumstances:

- **More than 3 days unauthorised absence over a 6 week period**
- **More than 3 days unauthorised absence where this is for the purpose of a holiday in term time**
- **Where parents fail to ensure that their child attends regularly even though support has been provided by the Academy**
- **Where there is a repeated pattern of unauthorised absence leading to attendance below 96%**
- **Where a pupil is persistently late for 10 separate instances over a period of six academy weeks and where these are signified as a "U" in the attendance register.**

PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE

99% - 100% Excellent

96% - 98.9% Good

95% - 95.9% Satisfactory

93% - 94.9% Requires Improvement (this equates to more than 1 day of absence every 4 weeks)

90% - 92.9% At Risk of Persistent Absence

Below 90% **Persistent Absentee** (this equates to more than 1 day off every 2 weeks)

PERSISTENT ABSENCE THRESHOLDS

Absence includes holidays, illness, medical appointments and lateness (after registers close at 9.10am).

A persistence absentee has an attendance of 90% or less.

90% attendance is equivalent to 19 days absence in a year. These pupils are missing 4 weeks of schooling a year, it will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best.

Pupils with 80% attendance are missing a day for every week of academy. It will be almost impossible to keep up with work.

Penalty notices for poor attendance

The Government have set the **persistent absence** threshold to 10% from September 2015 therefore where the **attendance of a pupil falls below 90% this can lead to a penalty notice** being issued where there are concerns about unauthorised absence or, in cases of illness, the legitimacy of the absence and, following support from the academy, attendance does not improve.

N.B. Pupils with individual needs will be given particular consideration and support offered to minimise impact of poor attendance

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The Attendance Manager will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Academy Principal. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- When a child's attendance falls below 90% the academy will send an Initial Concern Letter home.
- If the concerns persist for another 2 weeks the academy will write to the parents/carers advising them that their child's attendance will be monitored for 6 weeks from the date of the Initial Concern Letter.
- If there is no improvement after the 6 week period the academy will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, academy representative and the Governors. This will be followed by a letter confirming outcomes of the meeting and informing parents that if attendance does not improve, a request will be made for a penalty fine to be issued
- Where pupils are absent unauthorised for 3 days, a letter will be sent to parents warning that a penalty notice may be issued
- Where there have been concerns shared with parents and support has been offered but attendance continues to be a concern, a request will be made for a penalty notice.

SICKNESS

- Please notify the academy by 9:30am on the first day of the absence. Failure to notify the academy either by phone or text on the first day or letter upon a child's return to the academy 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 with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable 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 or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of staff in the Academy office. (Please note: that the Academy is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)
- Persistent absence due to illness may result in a referral to the School Nurse.

LATENESS

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

- Children must be in class by 9:00 a.m. each day. Doors open at 8:50 a.m. to allow all children to be in class by 9:00 a.m. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at the academy after 9:00am when they have to enter through the main entrance.
- Lateness will be monitored and the Attendance Manager will follow this up.
- If the arrival at the academy is after the registers have closed at 9.30 a.m., the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an unauthorised absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the academy premises in accordance with health and safety.
- More than 10 unauthorised 'lates' in a 6 week period could result in a penalty fine.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of academy hours or during academy holidays.

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We celebrate good attendance throughout our academy by

- Classes will be celebrated on a Friday assembly for good attendance:
- Class attendance for the week is included in the newsletter with the winning class congratulated.
- 100% attendance – Half-termly and termly dojos are given to individual children.
- At the end of the summer term, all pupils achieving 100% attendance for the whole year receive a special treat with the Academy Principal.

Governors' Role

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Academies Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their Academies. The Academies attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

- Agreeing an academy policy 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
- As Parent Governors, to uphold the agreed Attendance Policy
- To support the Academy Principal, where applicable, to make joint decisions

Academy Principal's Role

- To ensure parents and carers are informed about the academy attendance policy.
- To develop strategies to improve attendance
- To outline the importance of maximum attendance to parents at every opportunity; new parents' meetings, open evenings, newsletters
- To outline to parents the procedure for notifying academy about pupils' absences.
- To ensure letters are sent as stated in the procedure by the Attendance Officer
- To investigate absence where related to safeguarding or wellbeing concerns
- Liaise with staff to work with families to improve pupil attendance
- To enforce attendance procedures rigorously, including requesting for penalty notices to be issued where appropriate
- To analyse attendance for vulnerable groups with the SENCO/FSW

Attendance Officer's Role

- To attend the Attendance networks and work with the Academy Principal to develop strategies to improve attendance
- To telephone parents where there is unexplained absence and record details
- To monitor attendance daily for pupils of concern and record details
- To inform Academy Principal/designated person where a pupil with safeguarding issues is absent
- To refer to class teacher, SENCo or Academy Principal where absence may be due to medical needs or welfare issue
- To report attendance weekly, half termly, termly and annually to Academy Principal
- To provide reports to class teachers before parents' evenings
- To deal with requests for leave in term time in the same week they are received
- To send letters in response to requests as agreed with Academy Principal
- To send letters confirming referral for a penalty notice

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- To analyse patterns in attendance
- To provide termly reports for governors committee
- To provide attendance information for end of year reports

Teacher's Role

- To administer registration efficiently and promptly
- To make it clear to their pupils 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 pupil welfare- bullying/anxiety/home circumstances and put support in place
- Refer to SENCo, FSM, Academy Principal of concerns
- To inform the Academy Principal immediately if child on protection plan is absent or if there are any concerns whatsoever about the whereabouts of a child
- To discuss attendance of below 90% with parents at parents evening

Parents' Role

- Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the 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 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.
- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.50 a.m.
- To inform the academy of any absence and keep us up to date of any prolonged absence. If we are not informed of a reason for absence this will be considered as unauthorised.
- To inform us of leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the academy and The Family Service to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the academy day. Medical appointments don't normally need a full day so 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.
- To not take holidays in academy term time

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

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.
- Talk to either Mrs Roberts (Attendance Officer) or Mrs Hurley (Principal)

Pupils' Role

- To arrive at the academy for 8:50 a.m. on time
- To report to the office if late. (After 9:00am)
- To attend the academy on every possible day.

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