



LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST

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Absence Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims of this Policy	3
3. Responsibilities	4 - 5
4. Reporting Absence	6
5. Taking the Register	6
6. Punctuality and Lateness	7
7. Authorised Absence	8
8. Unauthorised Absence	9
9. Leave of Absence and Holidays within Term Time	9
10. Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling	10
11. Absence through competing at county, regional or national level for sport	11
12. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families	11
13. Religious Absence	11
14. External Appointments within Academy Hours	12
15. Academy Closures	12
16. Education of Pupils with Medical Needs	12
17. Pupils Refusing to attend School	13
18. Alternative Provision	13
19. Promoting Good Attendance	15
20. Monitoring and Protocols for dealing with Absence	15
21. Penalty Notices and Legal Action	16
22. Non-Compulsory Age Attendance	17
23. Removing Pupils from the School Roll	18
24. Named staff with Responsibility for attendance	19
25. Reporting Absence and Response to N Codes or Missing Children Flow Chart	20
26. School Attendance System Protocol for Dealing with Absence	21
27. Punctuality (Lateness) Protocol	22

1. Introduction

It is the right of every young person of school age to receive a high-quality full-time education that is suitable for their age, ability, and any special educational needs. Excellent school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them and achieve their full potential.

Young people who fail to attend school regularly cannot receive a coherent education programme as absence disturbs the continuity of the curriculum and damages social relationships. Absences or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others and may put extra pressure on teaching staff as planning needs to be amended or they may be required to provide individual programmes of work.

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at Biggleswade Academy and to establish positive life habits necessary for future success. It encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing life skills. Frequent absences mean that they will inevitably miss out on essential learning and on events taking place such as school visits.

Good attendance and punctuality also maximises the Academy's potential to safeguard pupils and minimises the risks of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse. When pupils are absent, support academically, socially or emotionally cannot take place if required.

The Academy displays a positive and pro-active ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality, as well as valuing its partnership with parents/carers to promote excellent attendance. While our attendance target is 96%, it is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children and therefore this policy advocate's close working relationships with all stakeholders to provide a cohesive approach to tackling absence.

The Academy recognises that good attendance happens when the pupils want to be in school and therefore strives to embed a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all of our children are keen and ready to learn.

2. Aims of this Policy

To share the responsibility for promoting school attendance amongst everyone at Biggleswade Academy and to develop and implement an effective absence policy that touches all aspects of the Academy's life, and relates directly to the Academy's values, ethos and curriculum.

To raise the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and ensure that all stakeholders recognise that 'attendance is everyone's business'.

To encourage pupils and families to recognise the importance of attending school every day.

To promote and develop attendance and punctuality as a habit of excellence.

To ensure that absences are monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly, accurately and consistently.

3. Responsibilities

Trustees

The Trust Board is legally responsible for many aspects of Academy management including the attendance register. It is therefore registered with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, the Academy Principal manages the day-to-day running of the Academy and in doing so takes responsibility for the implementation of this policy which the Trustees will review and approve annually.

Trustees recognise the importance of school attendance and will support the Principal in promoting it across the Academy ethos and policies.

The Principal will:

- Regularly update the Trustees about absence data and issues.
- Ensure there are designated members of staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters, this includes an 'Attendance Champion' to oversee all matters related to attendance.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Academy will:

- Maintain two registers:
 - a) An Admissions register (known as the school roll).
 - b) An Attendance register for all pupils, including those that are not of compulsory age.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality at least on a monthly basis.
- Ensure Progress Leaders are aware of their Year Group's absence percentage, are pro-active in addressing issues with individual pupils and follow the procedures regarding attendance and absence, as outlined in this policy.
- Ensure class form teachers are aware of their class's absence percentage, are pro-active in addressing issues and follow the procedures regarding attendance and absence, as outlined in this policy.
- Implement strategies to promote excellent attendance and support pupils and their families who have difficulties in attending school regularly and do not reach the absence targets set.
- Ensure class and subject teachers contribute to the reduction of absences by delivering interesting and engaging lessons and insist on good attendance and punctuality for themselves, colleagues and pupils.
- Ensure all staff are aware of, and know how to implement care, guidance and support policies, in order to recognise where there may be issues affecting pupil attendance and to be pro-active in dealing with issues in the appropriate way.
- Endeavour to build strong relationships with families and to understand barriers to good attendance and put measures in place to overcome them.
- Submit the details of the level of absence within the Academy through the termly School Census.
- Register with 'Studybugs' to allow the Local Authority access to attendance records.
- Register with the DFE to have access to weekly attendance monitoring reports.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Regularly report data to parents/carers and all other appropriate bodies such as the Trustees and School Attendance Improvement Officer.

Staff will:

- Recognise that attendance is everyone's business and be pro-active in promoting excellent attendance by all.
- Follow the procedures and protocols regarding attendance and absence, as outlined in this policy.
- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately.
- Liaise with Progress Leaders and the Attendance Lead on matters of absence and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a pupil's absence.
- Communicate with, and support parents and carers, in addressing concerns about a pupil's attendance;
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.
- Endeavour to encourage all pupils to reach their true potential and eventually become independent learners who value learning with and from others; to have a positive attitude to life-long learning; to value application, perseverance, initiative and independence of thought and action, as well as co-operative endeavors.

Parents/Carers

It is a legal obligation of all parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly; by law all children of compulsory school age must receive a proper full-time education. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 7 Education Act 1996) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

The 1996 Education Act states;

"If a child of compulsory school age who is registered pupil at the school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure their child attends school every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies e.g. a child is too ill to attend.
- Ensure their child arrives on time.
- Support the Academy in aiming for 100% attendance each academic year;
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone, on-line absence form or email on the first day, and subsequent days of absence.
- Ensure that the Academy has up-to-date contact information for themselves and emergency contacts.
- Only request authorisation for 'leave of absence' in term time if it is for an exceptional circumstance or for statutory reasons and will do so at least 2 weeks before the leave is required.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Work with the Academy and Attendance Officer to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence.
- Attend meetings as required in relation to their child's attendance.

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend school every day and to arrive punctually at school and to the start of lessons.
- If late, pupils must sign in at the appropriate office.
- If pupils are required to leave the premises during the school day they must sign in and out at the relevant Academy office. (This is for their safety as well as administrative purposes).
- Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence e.g. bullying, racism etc.
- If requested, pupils must attend a return to school meeting with the appropriate staff member.
- Pupils should understand that only 'real' illnesses can be a reason for absence.

4. Reporting Absence

A child not arriving at school when the parents haven't informed the school is considered to be a serious safeguarding matter. Therefore, information about the reason for any absence is always required. It is the policy of the Academy that no absence should be unaccounted for.

First Day Response

On the first day of absence parents/carers are expected to contact the Academy office, preferably through the online attendance form which can be found on the Academy website, or email on absence@biggleswadeacademy.org or by telephone by 8.45am.

The parent/carer reporting the absence is required to give the reason for the absence and the expected date of return.

If the date of the return is unknown, contact on a daily basis must be kept with the Academy.

If the absence is reported through the online form or by email, the Academy may still make contact by telephone if further details are required.

If the Academy receives no contact by 10.00am, a member of the office team will arrange to check if the child is in the lesson that they should be in. If present, the register will be marked accordingly.

If absent, they will:

- Telephone and email the parent/carers.
- Make enquiries to siblings and/or peers at the Academy
- Make enquiries to wider family members
- Make further telephone calls to all registered contacts
- Inform the Academy Safe-guarding team and Academy Attendance Officer

Until contact is made, the absence will be coded as 'N'. If an 'N' code is recorded the following day and no contact can be made with the parent/carer, the Academy may carry out an unannounced home visit to ensure that the child is safe. If there is no answer at the home address, the Academy may contact the police.

Reporting an absence does not guarantee authorisation.

Third Day Response

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers after three days of absence the school is required to consider implementing the '*missing in education*' procedures as set down by Central Bedfordshire Council. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family members.

5. Taking the Register

Registers are legal documents – indeed they may be used as evidence in court cases. For this reason, they are retained for a minimum of three years.

The Legal register is held on our *MIS (Management Information System)*

The register will be taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and again the start of the afternoon session. This means that each full school day is recorded as 2 sessions:

ABSENCE POLICY

Reception - Morning registration is between 8.55am and 9.10am.
- The morning register closes at 9.10am.
- Afternoon registration is between 1.00pm and 1.10pm
- The school day closes at 3.25pm

Years 1- 6 - Morning registration is between 8.45am and 9.00am.
- The morning register closes at 9.00am.
- KS1 afternoon registration is between 1.00pm and 1.10pm
- KS2 registration is between 1.30pm and 1.40pm.
- The school day closes at 3.15pm

For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent:

/ - is entered to show the pupil is present in the morning session

\ - is entered to show the pupil is present in the afternoon session

N - is entered to show the pupils is absent until the reason is known.

Once the Academy has been officially notified of the reason for any absence, the appropriate registration code will be inserted by a member of the Admin team.

The register will clearly differentiate between whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised by the Academy; It is the policy of the Academy that no absences are unaccounted for.

6. Punctuality and Lateness

It is vital that pupils are on time at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and also to lessons. The registration period is used for activities such as phonics, morning work, interventions, to give out instructions or messages or to organise work.

If a child is late they may; miss time with their class teacher and vital information; cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

Being 10 minutes late everyday throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

For Years 1 – 6, the school day begins at 8.45am and for Reception pupils the day starts at 8.55am. All pupils are expected to be in school by the correct time.

A child will be registered as late in the morning if they arrive after the perimeter gates have been closed to access. In such circumstances they will need to enter the Academy by the relevant Academy office.

If Yrs 1- 6 arrive after the gates are closed, but before 9.00am, the 'late' will be recorded on our electronic management system and on the register as an 'L'. If Reception pupils arrive after the gates are closed, but before 9.10am the 'late' will be recorded on our electronic management system and on the register as an 'L'.

Registers will close 15 minutes after registration starts. Unless there has been an authorised medical reason, any pupil who arrives after this time will be automatically coded as 'U' in line with the Department of Education guidance.' This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence.

All lateness is recorded daily as this information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

ABSENCE POLICY

Pupils who travel to school independent of an adult, may not be arriving directly. When such children arrive late to school without an adult, their parents/carers will be informed by email by a member of the office staff.

Lateness can be an indication of more serious problems as well as poor time management. We have a duty to ensure every child's safety and therefore may telephone home after 5 recorded lates.

All pupils who are marked as 'L' or 'U' on at least 5 occasions over a 12-week period may be required to make up lost time at break or lunch times, especially if they are missing vital activities such as phonics or interventions.

Our level of contact will be increased if lateness continues until after 10 lates when the Academy Attendance Officer will be informed and parents/carers may be invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss the problem and support strategies that can be offered.

If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 12-week period, the school may ask Central Bedfordshire Council to intervene which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

7. Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the Academy has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for an absence; absence with permission from the Academy Principal or other authorised representative of the Academy.

Even when pupils are engaged in an Approved Educational Activity off-site, they must not be marked as present, as good Health and Safety practice requires that the Academy needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or real emergency.

The Academy may authorise absence in the following circumstances;

- a. Personal illness (Excessive or extended absences or an absence in the days immediately before or after a school holiday will require medical evidence).
- b. Medical Appointment (Copy of appointment to be seen and copied)
- c. Family bereavement
- d. Family funeral (Maximum of three days to allow for travel there and back)
- e. A family wedding where the pupil is playing an important role and evidence has been provided. (Maximum of three days to allow for travel there and back)
- f. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to a child's health and safety.
- g. Religious observance
- i. Involvement in a public performance
- j. Approved sporting activity
- k. Entrance exams

For periods of prolonged absence because of illness, the Academy is likely to seek the advice of the school nurse and HPA (Health Protection Agency) and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised by the Health Authority for the illness.

8. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is when the Academy has not received a justified reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request.

The Academy is unlikely to authorise absence in the following circumstances;

- a. No explanation is offered by the parent/carer.

- b. The Academy views the explanation offered as unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, visiting family, refusing to attend etc.)
- c. If a pupil's absence rate is 10% or more and no medical evidence has been supplied.
- d. Leave of absence which is taken without the Academy's prior consent or knowledge and/or is in excess of the time agreed by the Academy.
- e. Special occasions such as birthdays.
- f. Minding siblings
- g. Parent/carer/sibling illness, hospital stays or appointments.
- h. Treatment of head lice.
- i. Family holidays in term time.

Unauthorised absence from school is considered truancy. This can take the form of absence from school for complete days, lateness and absenteeism from individual lessons. Each of these is as serious as the other, but the strategies for effecting change may need to be different.

When parents are unaware of such absences there may be a significant danger to the young person's safety as it is likely that their whereabouts are unknown by a responsible adult. Unfortunately, there may be occasions when truancy is condoned by parents. If such collusion occurs it is the duty of the Academy to work with the pupil and family to change their attitudes towards school, thus encouraging full attendance.

If a pupil has 20 consecutive sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence, or 30 consecutive sessions (15 days) of authorised absence the Academy is required to inform the local authority.

If a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absences during a 12-week period (equivalent to five days), the parents/carers can be issued with a Fixed Penalty notice by the Local Authority.

9. Leave of Absence and Holidays within Term Time

Education legislation is clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether the absence is authorised at all. This regulation highlights the crucial link between pupil's attendance and their success within school and to ensure Headteachers take a firmer approach towards parents who remove their children from school during term time in order to go on holiday.

Holidays in term time can only be agreed by the Academy Principal or their designated person.

The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are; rare, significant or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases, holiday will not be authorised. The Academy will however consider every absence application individually.

The Academy Principal will use discretion to grant authorised 'Leave of Absence' in a school year if both the following apply:

- a. The parent/carer the child normally resides with, applies for absence to the Academy in writing to the Principal, by email or letter, through the attendance officer at least 2 weeks in advance of the intended leave of absence.
- b. There are 'exceptional circumstances' for the holiday.

Special reasons or exceptional circumstances that may be agreed to are;

ABSENCE POLICY

- A dying relative in a different country
- A family funeral in another country/ part of the country (3 days maximum)
- Holidays for fostering or adoption purposes
- Recognised religious observance
- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during normal school holiday times. (Evidence must be provided to this effect.)
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

The Academy is unable to authorise absence because of:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Avoiding traffic/travel issues, including busy airports at peak travel times.
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays periods
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term
- Another sibling in another school where the holidays do not coincide
- A special treat for the child or family.
- Parent/carer's working commitments
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member
- Lack of childcare or transport

In the unlikelihood of Leave of Absence for a holiday being authorised, it will be for a maximum of 10 sessions (5 school days).

Authorisation will not be considered during assessment times for Yr 1, Yr 2 and Yr 6 (End of Key Stage Examinations and Phonics testing). This may also include during the preparation period leading up to the exams.

Once a decision has been made about the absence request the parents/carers will receive notification via an emailed letter.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the Academy, the absence will be automatically unauthorised and if the number of sessions of absence reaches the thresholds in Central Bedfordshire Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (10 sessions or 5 days of unauthorised absence in 10 school weeks), parents/carers may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or other legal action in accordance with the code.

It is important to note that when FPNs are issued by the local authority it is to each parent/carer, for each absent child. (For example: 2 children and 2 parents/carers means each parent will receive 2 invoices.) The Academy does not benefit financially from any FPNs.

10. Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

A parent/carer can seek leave of absence from the Academy for their child to take part in a performance. They must however contact the Academy Principal to discuss the nature and frequency of this, the impact that this may have on their child's education, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence.

If a child's absence rate is greater than 4%, it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted. However, it remains down to the Academy Principal's discretion as to whether to authorise this.

Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

11. Absence through competing at county, regional or national level for sport

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in county, regional, national and international events and competitions. However, it remains the Academy Principal's discretion as to whether to authorise this or not and they may wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Permission for pupils to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Academy Principal and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

If a child's absence rate is greater than 4%, it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted.

The absence will be coded as P on the register.

The regulations related to children participating in public performances and sporting events are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. The Academy Principal can authorise this absence.

Further advice and guidance on Child Employment and Performance Licenses is available through Central Bedfordshire Council.

12. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

The absence of a child from a Traveller family who has left the area can be authorised if the absence is for the parent's work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return.

The Academy cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll whilst they are travelling. When the child is travelling the school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised by using the T code.

To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration at two schools is allowed.

Please note that pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12-month period to be able to use travelling for work purposes as a defence against prosecution.

Further advice and guidance on attendance and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families is available through Central Bedfordshire Council.

13. Religious Absence

The Academy will authorise one day of absence per religious festival. This will be marked as Code R in the register. Parents/carers must request this leave and any additional days in writing and in advance.

14. External Appointments within Academy Hours

The Academy recognises that there are occasions when pupils need to go out of school for an appointment (e.g. doctor, dentist, optician, CAMH etc.). Where possible, all appointments should be made outside of Academy hours or during the lunch break.

If an appointment is during the school day, a request for the absence to be authorised should be made at least 24 hours before the appointment to allow for authorisation to be considered.

Evidence for the appointment should be provided with the request (e.g. appointment card/ hospital letter) Without this evidence, the absence is unlikely to be authorised.

The request can be made verbally or in writing through the Academy office.

The Academy acknowledges that there are occasions when requests cannot always be made in advance as appointments at doctors and dentists etc. can sometimes be made on the actual day. Where this is the case, evidence must still be provided when the child returns to school or the absence may not be authorised.

Safeguarding protocols require that we must be certain where a child has been, even if they are with their parent/carer. If the pupil leaves the site during the school day, they must be collected in person by their parent/carer and must sign out at the relevant Academy office. We will not allow a child to leave alone. (Being told that a parent/carer is going to wait in the car park etc. is not sufficient for our safeguarding procedures.)

If they return during the school day they are required to sign back in.

If a parent/carer needs to collect a child early for child care reasons as a result of their own, or a sibling's appointment, this will always be unauthorised.

15. Academy Closures

If the Academy has to close due to severe weather conditions, problems with amenities such as water or heating, fire, structural damage, in-service training, or teacher strikes, no attendance registers are needed. This will be coded appropriately.

16. Education of Pupils with Medical Needs

Biggleswade Academy recognises its responsibilities for all pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons. Young persons should be able to access education without stigma or exclusion. The Academy's aim is to ensure pupils have access to as much education as their medical condition allows.

Pupils covered by this may:

- a) Be recovering from an illness or injury
- b) Have a long term or recurring illness
- c) Have an illness or clinically defined mental health disorder which causes them to be absent for a period in excess of 15 days, where medical opinion states they are still unable to access mainstream school.

Absence in such circumstances will be authorised and coded with an 'I'.

The SENDCo, in partnership with the Attendance Officer, will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that absence is kept to a minimum. This may mean specific support or resources used within school or by sourcing appropriate provision at another provision.
- Ensuring work is set to be completed at home. This may mean through physical resources, Google classroom or through other online resources. The work will be checked and feedback given where appropriate.
- Ensuring that Medical Needs Referral Forms (Request for Involvement and Request for Medical Information forms) are completed and passed to the relevant agencies as quickly as possible.
- Ensuring that the pupil is transferred to the Medical Needs register, and that, working with the relevant Year Leader and Class teacher, a Personal Education Plan is drawn up if necessary.
- Arranging for the relevant member of staff to meet with the Medical Needs Team to plan appropriate work and a programme of action and review.
- Ensuring details of whole school events and parents' evenings are communicated to parents.
- Ensuring that all pupils covered by this policy have access to SATs and guidance on appropriate coursework.
- Requesting special arrangements where necessary.

Parents/Carers are expected to be full collaborative partners in the process of ensuring all pupils maximise their attendance. Where difficulties arise parents/carers must be able to access information, advice and support during a pupil's illness either through the Academy or other agencies, as appropriate. Opportunities to allow the pupil to be involved in decision making and choices will also be arranged.

When a pupil has been absent from school for a prolonged period, the Academy and other support services will work with the family to ensure smooth reintegration.

Regular contact will be maintained via telephone calls, virtual meetings and home visits during the period of any prolonged absence.

17. Pupils refusing to attend school

At Biggleswade Academy, we firmly believe that every child has a right to a full-time education and as such cannot accept 'school refusal' as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend and offer support and strategies to help remove the barriers.

Such strategies may include interventions such as the pupil coming through a separate entrance for a short while, support from our pastoral team or offering a calm, safe place at break times.

We would expect this to be a partnership and for parents to also offer solutions.

For safeguarding reasons and to maintain relationships with the pupil in question, regular contact will be maintained via telephone calls, virtual meetings and home visits during the period of any prolonged absence.

The Academy may, with parent/carers consent, make referrals to external partners and complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA)

If the unauthorised absence extends to a consecutive 20 session period (10 days), the school will notify the Local Authority.

18. Alternative Provision

There is a range of circumstances when access to alternative provision may need to be considered. This may be in the form of a part-time timetable (Reduced Educational Provision) or to access to education provision at a venue other than the Academy, including at home.

The main reasons are likely to be for;

- Pupils unable to access provision at the Academy for recognised medical reasons, including mental health.
- Pupils who need a planned re-integration back into school.
- Pupils who need time and support to manage their behaviour or emotional or social needs.
- Pupils who have been excluded, either for a fixed term of more than 5 days or permanently.
- Pupils who are at risk of exclusion
- Pupils who are required to attend another venue with a view to making it permanent move via a 'managed move'.
- Where it is stated on a child's EHCP and there is agreement with the Local Authority

The Academy recognises that every child is entitled to, and benefits most from, a full-time education in school and as such would not automatically favour reduced or Alternative Educational Provision.

The decision to implement such strategies will consider if it is in the best interests of the child and will only be used as a last resort.

All measures will be implemented with a view to getting the child back into a full-time education in school as quickly as possible.

However, in extreme cases, such as school refusal or when a pupil is at risk of exclusion, when all other strategies have not been successful, it is recognised that measures such as an initial part-timetable may be a way of encouraging a pupil back into school positively.

Informal part-time timetables will be time limited and only be used for a maximum of 2 weeks, with a view to slowly increasing hours to full time by the end of the 2-week period.

If this has to be increased this will become a formal strategy, at which point the Local Authority will be informed. This will be kept to a maximum of 6 weeks (8 weeks in total).

All part time-tables and any other Alternative Provisions must be authorised by the Principal before they are confirmed with the parents/carers and before being implemented.

For all Alternative Provisions, a risk assessment will be completed by the Principal or Attendance Lead in co-operation with the SENDCo, Safeguarding Lead, Progress Leader and Form tutor. This must consider the pupil's vulnerabilities, welfare and supervision as there is an increased risk of child sexual exploitation, substance misuse, self-harming, radicalisation and other potential abuse or criminal activity. This will be signed off by the Principal.

The parents/carers of any child being educated through Alternative Provision must be given an opportunity to view and discuss any timetables and the risk assessment before signing a consent form.

The risk assessment and consent form will be submitted to the Local Authority.

The alternative or reduced provision must be reviewed regularly with set dates agreed by the Principal and parents /carers.

The Academy will provide appropriate work, or ensure that the work set by the provider, is suitable for when the pupil is not in school. It will ensure it is marked and that relevant feedback is provided.

When a pupil has been absent from school for a prolonged period, the Academy and other support services will work with the family to ensure a smooth planned reintegration.

Regular contact will be maintained via telephone calls, virtual meetings and home visits during the period of any prolonged absence.

Agreed alternative provision absence will be coded on the register as 'C'. Any session during which any official or recognised home tutoring is provided, will be coded as 'B'.

19. Promoting Good Attendance

Biggleswade Academy believes that 'good attendance is a learned behaviour' and recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset of a pupil starting school.

It also recognises that attendance is not an isolated component of school life and that it is supported by a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment, and an engaging and inspiring curriculum through which all pupils want to attend, and can learn and thrive.

We endeavor to offer a variety of extra-curricular activities, including sporting and creativity-based activities and enrichment days, across all year groups.

We strive to ensure that the Academy is a place that pupils want to come to and one in which they always feel safe and comfortable by ensuring that our policies such as behaviour and bullying are regularly reviewed and adhered to help make this happen.

Where appropriate, we aim to give pupils responsibility and show that they are valued through our praise and reward systems such as weekly recognition in assemblies, the termly BAT awards, Celebration of Work afternoons and the positive points system.

We endeavor to share all the exciting things that happen at the Academy through our social media pages, newsletter and on the website to demonstrate what pupils who are absent, are missing.

We firmly believe that attendance is 'Everybody's Business' and expect all teaching and non-teaching staff to promote the importance of good attendance when working in partnership with pupils and their families.

When a child returns after an absence their form tutor will discuss their attendance with them, making it clear what they have missed and why it is important to be in school.

Absence rates are reported to parents through absence letters/emails when appropriate, annual reports and via the Arbor App for parents.

The benefits of good attendance are made visible through attendance displays and through assemblies and form times when appropriate.

We set high expectations for attendance and punctuality of all pupils, which is communicated through our website, and other documentation related to attendance.

20. Monitoring and Protocols for dealing with Absences

Government guidelines define persistent absentees as pupils whose absences reach 10% (Attendance falls below 90%)

Government guidelines define severe absentees as pupils whose absences reach 50% or more (Attendance falls below 50%).

We expect every Biggleswade Academy pupil to achieve a maximum 4% absence.

National and Academy data shows that if a pupil is absent during the first 3 weeks of the Autumn term/Academic Year, they are likely to be considered at least a persistent absentee by the end of the Academic year. Academy data also shows that any pupil who starts mid-year and is absent within the first three weeks of being at the Academy is likely to be considered at least a persistent absentee by the end of the Summer Term.

If a pupil has been absent their class teacher will discuss this with them on their return to school.

ABSENCE POLICY

From the beginning of each Academic Year Progress Leaders will monitor their Year Group's attendance and absences via electronic registers on a weekly basis. This information will be shared with the relevant class teachers.

If a child's absences rise to our Academy target of 4%, even in the first half term, 'Trigger Point 1' will be activated as per our System Protocol. (Informal conversation at drop off/pick up or phone call home by the class teacher)

If the pupil's absences continue or rises to 10%, 'Trigger Point 2' will be activated. (1st letter of absence notification from the Progress Leader)

If there is still no improvement, the Attendance Lead/Attendance Champion will activate 'Trigger point 3' to invite parents/carers into school to discuss the concerns and any necessary support needed to get attendance back on track. This forms part of the partnership that the Academy endeavors to develop and parents/carers will be encouraged to share what they think will work and how they would like the Academy to help. Subsequent review meetings and home visits may form part of this support.

If there is still no improvement the Academy is likely to move to 'Trigger Point 4' and involve the Local Authority.

All actions and interventions will be recorded electronically by the appropriate person depending on the level of trigger point.

The Academy's Designated Attendance Lead/Attendance Champion will monitor attendance at least once a month and will discuss those pupils whose absences are at 4% or above with relevant Progress Leaders. They will look at emerging patterns for individuals and develop strategies to address them.

Each half term the Attendance Lead/Champion will analyse whole school attendance data to identify cohorts and emerging patterns that need additional targeted support. This will contribute to the information that will be shared with trustees.

The half termly analysis will also consider the impact of any interventions and strategies that have been put in place.

The Attendance Lead/Champion will meet at least termly with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to discuss the analysis results and to discuss further strategies or support, including referrals, that could be put in place to improve attendance further.

21. Penalty Notices and Legal Action

Central Bedfordshire Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices states that where a child has had 10 unauthorised absences in a 10 school week period, the school may request a penalty notice be issued. The code of conduct is a statutory document that ensures that the powers for this legal sanction are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

Penalty Notices can be issued when:

- A pupil has 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in a 10 week period (This includes U codes for arrival after the register has closed).
- A pupil has taken holiday during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school, providing the school has considered DfE guidance to inform its decision-making.
- The Academy believes that the sanction will lead to an improvement in attendance, e.g. persistent late arrival at school; parents' failure to attend/co-operate at a parenting contract meeting

ABSENCE POLICY

Parents and carers will be alerted/warned about any referral to the local authority or of any Fixed Penalty Notices being applied for prior to any application.

If more than one parent has parental responsibility, both parents/carers may receive a Penalty Notice. In situations where there is more than one pupil in a family with irregular school attendance, multiple penalty notices can be issued to the same parents during the year. However, this action must be subject to careful consideration and co-ordination.

Once applied for, the Local Authority may decide to issue a notice to as a final opportunity to avoid a penalty notice being issued and this will give a 30-school-day period, when should the child have no further unauthorised absences then no penalty notice will be issued. A notice to improve will not be issued where the penalty notice is for leave of absence (holiday during term-time) and the absence has not been authorised by the school.

Where a penalty notice is issued, then over a 3-year rolling period the sanctions are:

First offence – fine of £160 reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Second offence – fine of £160

Third offence – court hearing and up to £2,500 fine, or up to 3 months in prison and a criminal record

Once a penalty notice has been issued, there is no right of appeal, although there are circumstances in which the Academy may withdraw the notice.

Income from penalty notices is used to fund their enforcement and is paid to the Local Authority. The Academy receives no income from penalty notices.

Where the Academy has tried to address a pupil's unauthorised absences but the measures taken have been unsuccessful, it can then refer on to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer. If there is either no improvement in the attendance nor satisfactory evidence provided for the absences following their intervention, then it is likely that the Local Authority will initiate legal action through a Magistrates Court.

22. Non-Compulsory Age Attendance

Nursery attendance is a vital foundation for a child's learning, but to get the most benefit a child must attend regularly and promptly. These also provide good habits for the future. Nevertheless, parents of non-compulsory school age (below the age of 5) children do not have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at a school (this includes home education). However, if a child is registered at a school, parents do have a responsibility for ensuring that their child attends every day.

The school census now collects absence data in relation to pupils whom are aged 4; hence the need to ensure good attendance habits with non-compulsory aged pupils is now heightened for all schools. All non-compulsory age pupils should be treated exactly the same as compulsory age pupils and the same protocols should be followed.

The Academy also has a legal and moral duty to safeguard all pupils registered at the school, including those in our Early Years settings. Therefore, if an Early Years child is likely to be absent when they are expected in, parents/carers are required to inform the Academy through the relevant office.

When this does not happen, the Academy will follow its first response procedures in line with the expected times for the pupil's attendance times/sessions. (See Section 4)

23. Removing Pupils from the School Roll

If a child is leaving the Academy, (other than when transferring to secondary school) the Academy is required by law to register this with the Local Authority within 5 days of the pupil's departure.

In order to facilitate this process, prior to the leaving date, parents are requested to:

- a. Inform the Academy in writing that the pupil will be leaving.
- b. Give the attendance officer, via the 'Leaver's Form', comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move, new address and telephone numbers, the child's new school and the start date when known.

The Academy will not take the child off roll until it has been confirmed by the pupil's new school that they have started or it has been given authorisation to do so by the local authority.

If pupils leave and the Academy does not have the above information, and does not know where the child is being educated then the pupil is considered to be a *Child Missing in Education*. The Academy is expected to inform the Local Authority via the relevant on-line form.

This requires the Academy and the Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate the child, which may include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

This also applies to any pupil who has accumulated 10 consecutive days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the Academy to establish their whereabouts, including informing the police and any other parties and agencies involved.

If a child's whereabouts are known, but their absence is prolonged to 20 sessions or 10 days or more, the local authority will be informed through the relevant form, but the pupil will remain on roll until alternative arrangements are confirmed.

If a family chooses to remove their child from the Academy roll to Home School, the pupil will remain on roll until written confirmation has been received by the parent/carers. At this point the Academy will inform the Local Authority through the relevant on-line form.

ABSENCE POLICY

24. Named Staff with Responsibility for Attendance

Principal	Mr M Steer	Overall responsibility for attendance and authorising absences	masteer@biggleswadeacademy.org
Designated Attendance Lead / Attendance Champion (Assistant Principal)	Mrs D Briars	Responsible for leading attendance across the Academy, promoting good attendance analysing data and ensuring that targeted interventions are put in place to support pupils and families where attendance falls below Academy Targets.	dabriars@biggleswadeacademy.org
Designated Safeguarding Lead (Vice Principal)	Mrs B Wilson	Overall Responsibility for safeguarding	bcwilson@biggleswadeacademy.org
Safeguarding and Pupil Support Lead	Mrs C Gilbert	Safeguarding and pastoral support	cagilbert@biggleswadeacademy.org
All of these staff members can also be contacted through enquiries@biggleswadeacademy.org			

ABSENCE POLICY

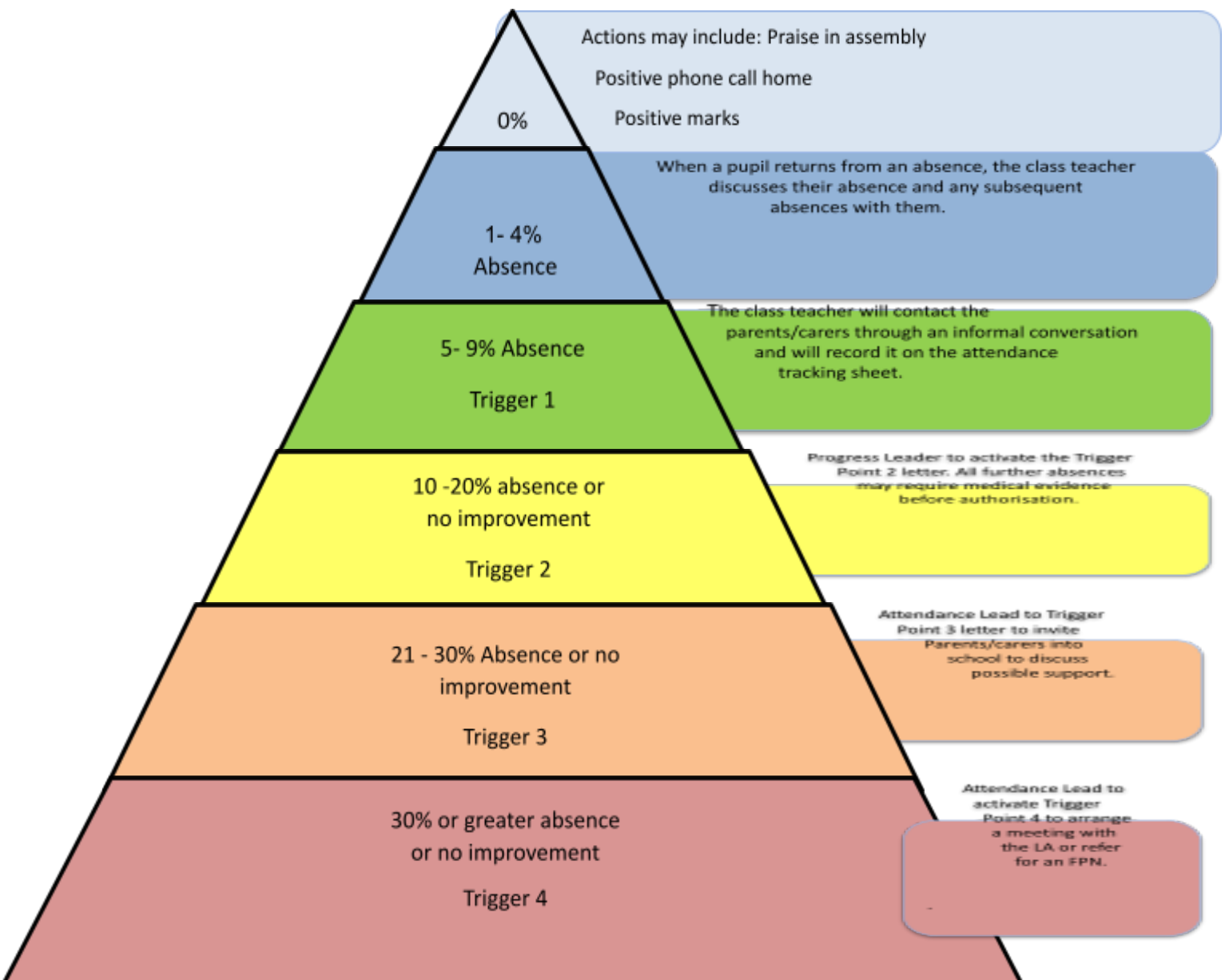
25. Appendix i

Reporting Absence and Response to N Codes or Missing Children Flow Chart



ABSENCE POLICY

26. School Attendance System Protocol for Dealing with Absence



ABSENCE POLICY

27. Punctuality (Lateness) Protocol

All lates to be recorded as 'L' for any arrivals after the gates have closed and before 9.00am. Arrival after the register has closed at 9.00am, unless for an authorised medical appointment is automatically coded as 'U'.

