



Youth Challenge Attendance Policy

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Introduction

It is the aim of Youth Challenge to support all pupils to have maximum attendance and achieve their true potential. Pupils need to attend the academy regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Youth Challenge fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in the academy and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this academy and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our academy on our academy website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Academy Leads and Governors at our academy work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from academy frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our academy are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the academy.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff, schools and the Early Intervention Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good academy attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on academy attendance matters.

- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at the academy which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at our academy.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from academy for a legitimate reason and the academy has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the academy to explain the absence.
- Only the academy can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from the academy without the permission of the academy.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from the academy without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our academy will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the academy.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To work with our mainstream schools to monitor the attendance of pupil's who are dual registered.
- To refer to the Early Intervention Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to academy initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Bolton LA and the DfE where requested.

Responsibilities

All members of the academy staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Keyworkers/Outreach Mentor

These are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Informing the Behaviour and Attendance Manager where there are concerns
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their pupils the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the EIT Service
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Discussing attendance issues at Staff briefings where necessary
- Monitoring students personal success targets for attendance

Attendance officer

- Making referrals to the EIT service
- Referring any attendance concerns to the key working team
- Overall monitoring of academy attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Monitoring and reporting attendance to the Academy Lead including overall data on personal success targets
- Any child on a CP plan or LAC, but are living at home and are absent contact the EIT team to arrange a home visit.

Attendance officer (Secondary)

Staff in the Academy Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring pupils arriving late are registered
- Contacting parents of absent children within an hour where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends the academy regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the academy office on the first morning of absence
- Informing the academy in advance of any medical appointments in academy time
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised
- Talking to the academy as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to academy so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Lateness

Once the registration period has closed in the morning the only way to get into academy is via the academy office. Any pupil who comes into academy this way from 9.20am will be marked as late in the attendance record (unless on an alternative timetable). Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to academy later than 9.20am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve in the day

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the academy will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

ABSENCES

Parents/carers should contact the academy on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence.

This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The Academy Leads have the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then the child's Keyworker or the outreach mentor will contact home requesting these details.

Absence Follow Up

Secondary

Where a child is absent from the academy and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first hour contact process. **(appendix 1)**

- The attendance officer check all of the registers from 9.30am – 10am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. In the instances where the children are dual registered with their mainstream school we will contact the schools to inform them of the pupil's absence. Appendix 2.
- In the case of children on a safeguarding plan we will inform the social worker on each day of absence.
- In a child is absent for 3 consecutive days without contact from a parent/carer a member of staff will visit the home.
- If we are unable to locate a student we will refer through to Bolton's Missing in Education team **(See safeguarding, Keeping children safe in education policy.)**
- If we have any safeguarding concerns due to a child attendance we will refer to the designated safeguarding officer who will take the appropriate action **(see safeguarding, keeping children safe in education policy.)**

Primary

- The teacher and attendance mentor checks the attendance of the children at 9.15am (**appendix 2**).

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from the academy long term, the academy will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their academy work.

Parental Request for Absence from Academy for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of an Academy Lead to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Academy Leads will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits at Youth Challenge. It is the responsibility of the Academy Leads, Behaviour and Attendance manager, Keyworkers, Outreach mentor and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends academy regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the academy with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the academy has a responsibility to make a referral to the Early Intervention Service.

The Early Intervention Service (EIT) may issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EIT from the academy as part of the academy's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

Monitoring Attendance

Secondary

Our attendance officer, have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Deputy Head, Attendance Officer and Keyworkers to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Primary

The Attendance Mentor and the Academy Lead have the responsibility for ensuring that all the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Concerns are discussed and shared with the child's mainstream schools. Review meetings are used to share any concerns and to discuss necessary actions and support.

Appendix 1

Youth Challenge Secondary - Pupil Absent Follow Up

What happens every morning?

- Attendance officer check registers from 9.30am – 9.45am
- Attendance officer identifies those pupils who are absent by 9.45am
- If there is no contact from home by 9.45am, Attendance officer will contact parents/carers by telephone to ascertain reasons for absence.
- If a valid reason is given the absence is to be recorded on SIMs
If no reason is given this will be chased by the keyworker



If a child is on dual roll or on a Traded Place

Children on dual register or a traded placement the attendance officer will contact the main school to inform them of the pupil's absence.



If a child is on level 4 of the Framework for Action

Children on a safeguarding plan the attendance officer will inform the social worker on each day of the absence.



If a child is Looked After

The attendance officer will inform the social worker on each day of absence.
If LAC but living at home the attendance officer will contact the EIT team



In a child is absent for 3 consecutive days without parental contact

- A member of staff (Attendance officer) will visit the home to identify the issues
 - If necessary the child's key worker will create an attendance plan (EHA)
- Any safeguarding concerns we will be investigated and referred to appropriate agency.



If the child's attendance becomes a concern

- Key worker home visit takes place to explore the issues and create an attendance plan (EHA)
- If no progress formal school meeting to take place SLT
- If attendance continues to be a concern, staged warning letters and ultimately a fine to be triggered.
- Referral to other agencies, including the Early Intervention Team

Appendix 2

Youth Challenge Primary Pupil Absent Follow Up

