

# COPPICE ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY

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*Developed:*

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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole Academy community.

The Academy will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by students will be recognized appropriately.

All children should be at academy, on time, every day the academy is open. The academy day starts with registration at 08:40am and students will be expected to be in the classroom at that time.

08:40 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 10:00	Lesson 1
10:00 - 11:00	Lesson 2
11:00 – 11:10	Break
11:10 – 12:10	Lesson 3
12:10 – 13:10	Lunch
13:10 – 14:00	Lesson 4
14:00 – 14:55	Lesson 5
14:55- 15:00	Dismissal

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend the Academy. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the Academy, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from Academy without a good reason is an offence by the parent / carer.

Schools/academies are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a student of compulsory school/academy age is absent every half-day absence from Academy has to be classified by the academy, as either **AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only the Academy can authorize the absence, not parents.** This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

The attendance and behaviour policy must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of students.

Schools/academies have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.

**An authorised absence is:**

- An absence for sickness for which the academy has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the academy day for which the academy has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

**An Unauthorised absence is defined as:**

- Parents keeping children from attending the academy unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Leaving the academy for no reason during the day

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the Academy at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the academy or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

**Persistent absence**

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around **10%** or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period. **Students below 90%.**

A penalty notice will be considered where there are at least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during the current and previous terms. These absences do not need to be consecutive.

Parents will now only receive one warning notice period (of first 20 days for the purposes of issuing a penalty fine) in an academic year after which the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs in the remainder of the academic year.

Further a penalty notice can be considered for persistent late arrival at academy i.e. after the register has closed where there are at least 20 sessions of late arrival in the current and previous term. These late's do not have to be consecutive.

The penalty notice fine would be:

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent per child if paid within 21-28 days (regardless if child is living with parent)
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted on S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

If a prosecution takes place please be advised that the maximum fine is £1000 per parent per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from Academy.

### **Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence**

Penalty notice will be considered where

- Pupils take ten sessions of unauthorised absences (which do not have to be consecutive) and only last two sessions have to be for unauthorised leave of absence.
- The period for calculating the ten sessions will be based on the previous rolling calendar year.
- Parents can now receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year.

These ten sessions will be based on the previous rolling calendar year.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the academy and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the Academy office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

## Procedures

The Academy applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

Clear instructions are laid down for the completion of attendance registers in each lesson.

1) It is the Parents responsibility to contact the Academy on the first morning of an absence. Parents are asked to contact the Academy before 8.30am on EACH day their child is absent, informing of reason for absence and when their child will be returning. Parents are to inform us if they have been advised by a medical professional to remain absent from the Academy for a prolonged period of time i.e. in relation to a medical appointment or prescription prescribed.

If a child has sickness and/or diarrhoea, we advise a 48 hour absence from school after the last episode of sickness/diarrhoea.

If no telephone message is received the Academy receptionist will generate a phone call or text message

2) The Academy will always endeavour to contact home for an explanation of absence on the first day. If a student has a Social Worker, is in care or a Looked After Child, then the Academy will inform the necessary people to inform of student absence.

3) The Academy will also conduct a Welfare/Safeguarding Visit in some instances if there has been no contact with parents in regards to a student's absence for more than eight consecutive days.

4) If after ten days of absence and there is still no contact, then the academy will contact other agencies such as LST or others depending on the circumstances and what is known about the student. Where it is known that a false excuse has been given by a parent for an absence, this will be challenged.

4) Parents are requested to send formally give reasons of any absence preferably in writing by letter or in planner. **The Academy reserves the right to authorise any absence, not parents.**

5) Absences not supported by absence notes must always be reported to the appropriate member of staff.

6) Attending Academy regularly and attending on time are considered to be equally important. Sanctions are put in place for persistent poor punctuality which may include detention at break, lunch or after the Academy day. Very firm pressure is put on children and their parents to ensure punctuality which will include regular contact with parents, meetings with the Academy Principal.

7) There are a few families who have great difficulty in organising their affairs to secure good attendance and punctuality and whose aspirations for their children are low. Great efforts are made by the senior staff to provide support and

encouragement, using a mix of understanding and resolution that works in some cases but not all. Penalty notices will be issued where necessary.

8) The Academy aims to have all of its students maintaining higher than 95% attendance. When an individual student's attendance level falls below 95% the academy will monitor attendance very closely and may require parents and students to attend regular meetings to implement improvement strategies. The Attendance Officer will identify trends and patterns and will often make spot checks on particular absences. If attendance continues to fall the student and parent will need to attend more formal meetings with senior staff within academy. Where attendance cannot be secured despite any known illness the EWO is expected to pursue such cases with vigour and keep the academy informed accordingly.

9) If attendance falls at or below 90%, without good reason, a referral to the EWO will be made by the Academy. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

10) We encourage making medical appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the academy prior to the appointment. Students must attend the academy before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the student to leave during the day, they must be signed out by an adult listed on the student's record. Should a student arrive late to the academy following an appointment, they should report to the Main Reception where a member of staff will record that they are present. Any medical note or evidence of the appointments will be photocopied and kept in the student's personal file.

11) Parents must inform the Academy in advance if absence are required for days of Religious observance. The Academy will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made.

12) Students are NOT allowed to take holidays during academy time. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect on the 1 September 2013, now make it clear that head teachers will only authorise a holiday in academy time under exceptional circumstances. Parents who take their children out of academy for a holiday could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution, even if their attendance has been at or above 95%. In cases of unauthorised leave of absence both parents and carers will be fined regardless of which one applied for the leave.

13) The Academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. Academy staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure a high a level of attendance.

Coppice Academy recognises the importance of the Disability & Discrimination Act and will take every opportunity to ensure it is implemented for the benefit of all students, staff, parents and visitors.

The below will be given to Parents/Carers together with appropriate form.

#### **Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time**

1. Parents who want the academy to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the Academy Principal**. This form should be sent to the academy in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the academy's decision regarding their request. The Academy Principal cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that the Academy Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Academy Principal's now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from academy if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during academy holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in academy during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the Academy will take account of: -
  - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
  - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
  - the overall attendance pattern of the child
  - frequency of similar requests
  - whether the parent made the request in advance
  - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school/academy a separate request must be made to each school/academy. The head of each school/academy will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school/academy. However head teachers/Academy Principal's may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the academy decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to Academy at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the academy to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. Should the academy decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of academy, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 **per parent\* per child**. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.

9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all academy absences during term time and support head of academies in challenging parents who ignore the law.

\* Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.