

The Samworth Church Academy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

“Getting the curriculum, the teaching and the learning right, raising aspirations and extending horizons will enable students to excel. Improved results will therefore provide some, though by no means all performance indicators of the Academy’s success. (Academy Vision Statement)

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1. Principles

- 1.1 Maximum attendance at The Samworth Church Academy is vital if students are to achieve their full potential, both academically and socially. Absence from the Academy, whatever the cause, disrupts learning and will impact negatively on the life chances of students.
- 1.2 The Education Act 2011 requires parents or guardians to ensure that their children receive suitable full-time education. Academies are responsible for taking student attendance registers twice a day; within an hour of the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session.
- 1.3 Promoting excellent attendance is a whole Academy priority.

2. Aims

- i. For every student to achieve excellent attendance, specifically 97.5%+ which is less than 5 days absence in an academic year.
- ii. Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all associated with the Academy.
- iii. Set targets to improve individual and whole attendance levels.
- iv. Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence.
- v. Use a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.
- vi. Provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students.
- vii. Promote effective partnership with other services and agencies.

3. Strategies

The following strategies are implemented by those staff in the named positions.

- 3.1 The Academy has a dedicated Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) who has a strategic responsibility for the monitoring and management of student attendance. This post is supported by the Academy Attendance Assistant; both posts are managed under the leadership of the Director of Deep Support.
- 3.2 Students arriving late from 8.20am are listed daily by the late gate staff those late after the second bell at 8:25am must sign in at Student Information Desk. Students, which arrive after 8.35am when late gate is closed, should sign in at Student Information Desk. In all cases students will receive a lateness slip to take to their lesson. The sanction imposed for poor punctuality/lateness is a warning in their planner for the first instance of lateness in any term, with any further instances of poor punctuality/lateness incurring an iC4 sanction of 60 minutes. Parents will be notified of the date and time of the sanction by text message from the Consequences Manager.

- 3.3 Any student who has to leave the Academy before the end of the day must sign out at Student Information Desk after contact has been made with parents/carers.
- 3.4 All teaching staff have access to an electronic register system. Staff are required to register classes within 10 minutes of commencement of each lesson and transmit the register to the central database. When registering a class, the teacher should note any anomalies between the attendance at the previous lesson and the current one. This could indicate internal truancy and must be reported to the attendance assistant, who may inform the relevant Learning Manager and EWO. It is the responsibility of the subject teacher to take action over truancy from their lesson.
- 3.5 Statistics from the electronic register are accessible via iSAMS. The EWO, Learning Managers and the Attendance Assistant have a duty to act on this information to promote and support excellent attendance.
- 3.6 It is an expectation that parents notify the Academy on the first day their child is unable to attend, and each day thereafter when it is due to illness or other circumstances. When a parent fails to inform the Academy this will be logged as a safeguarding concern and possible truancy.
- 3.7 The Academy implements a “first day response” system, where the Attendance Assistant will make home contact for students who have not registered or been reported as absent by tutor time. If home contact is not made, then contact will be sought with all those listed under contact information on ISAMS. If contact cannot be made with any of these then a home visit will take place on the same day by the EWO or a member of Deep Support that the EWO has delegated authority to. If contact is not made then police will be informed via 101. The Academy will seek to ensure all students have a minimum of 3 listed contacts and these are to be reviewed for accuracy on an annual basis. Meetings are to be arranged with Exec. Team members and parents for those parents who fail to report absence. Tutors, who have notice of pre-arranged absences, should inform the attendance assistant.
- 3.8 The Academy operates a “traffic light system”, prepared by the Attendance Assistant, and other various strategies to support the attendance of all students. There are 6 strata; 100% attendance, 97.5%+, 95%+, 92.5%+, 90%+ and <90%.
- 3.9 The link between attendance and attainment is reinforced through assemblies.
- 3.10 The Learning Managers monitor their year group’s attendance using the prepared traffic light system. Those students whose attendance falls below 95% without good cause will be monitored fortnightly for improvements. Learning Managers communicate this monitoring process with parents/carers via letter.
- 3.11 A student becomes a “Persistent Absentee” when attendance falls below 90%. Absence at this level is significantly detrimental to the student’s education and must be explicitly reported in school performance tables. All such cases are referred to the EWO. The attendance of “Persistent Absentees” and those at risk of moving towards this level is monitored rigorously through the Academy’s tracking procedures.
- 3.12 The EWO meets daily with the Attendance Assistant and weekly with Learning Managers
- 3.13 The EWO makes home visits and may attend multi-agency meetings.
- 3.14 The Learning Managers organise Attendance Meetings for students, whose attendance is identified as a cause for concern following 4 weeks of monitoring with no improvement. Attendance Meetings are attended by the student with their parents/carers and their Learning Manager. If there remains no improvement in 6 weeks of monitoring the Learning Manager refers to the EWO for an Attendance Conference with the possibility of Penalty Notice being issued.
- 3.15 The attendance assistant is responsible for ensuring that attendance and punctuality statistics are prepared for display in the Academy on a weekly basis.
- 3.16 Some students may need support for reintegration after prolonged absence or a lengthy exclusion. Individual reintegration plans are arranged by the Learning Manager and Educational Welfare Officer, who may be supported by the Inclusion Co-Ordinator, SENDCO and Director Deep Support.
- 3.17 The Academy has the right to consider whether to accept a parent/carers position with regard to medical absence. If the Academy has concerns that the illness may not be genuine or warrant an absence, the Academy may ask to see additional evidence such as an appointment card or copy of a prescription. This is at the discretion of the EWO.

4. Leave of absence

- 4.1 The Samworth Church Academy will not authorise any leave of absence in term time. When a student has regular attendance of over 95% over a rolling academic year, the family will not be put forward for penalty. All leave of absence applications must be made in writing, prior to absence, to the Principal. Exceptional circumstances may be considered at the discretion of the Principal and EWO.

5. Legal action

- 5.1 Penalty Notices may be issued by the Academy in respect of unauthorised absence in accordance with Nottinghamshire Local Authority's code of practice.
- 5.2 Fast tracking to legal action is undertaken, particularly for students in Year 11.
- 5.3 From September 2013 there have been changes in national legislation in relation to parental requests to take children out of school on holiday during school term time. It will no longer be lawful for pupils to be take holidays from school during school term time. Should a parent decide to remove their child/children from education for the purpose of a holiday without the Academy granting permission, the Academy will instruct the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice.

6. Working with other agencies

- 6.1 Poor Academy attendance may be the result of difficulties faced by a student or family and a cause of other problems, such as exclusion; students with low levels of attendance tend to have other issues and therefore a co-ordinated approach by a number of agencies can assist these students and their families. Regular meetings, such as JAT, multi-agency meetings, are held to support the co-ordination of service provision and to build on good practice.

7. Rewarding Excellent Attendance

Students with excellent attendance will be rewarded within the Academy. These can include

- Certificates
- Prizes
- Letters home
- Recognition in assemblies