



Welholme
Academy



Attendance Policy

WELHOLME ACADEMY

Sep 2020

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Version History

Date	Author	Version	Comment
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1. Aims

The Enquire Learning Trust aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- emphasising that it is the responsibility of everyone in the Academy to improve attendance and punctuality.
- ensuring that all pupils access a full-time education which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- striving to provide a safe and caring environment where each child can engage in all opportunities offered.
- working with children and their families to ensure every child has good attendance and punctuality.
- challenging the behaviour of those children and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- providing an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- developing IT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Our Academy

What you can expect from Welholme Academy:

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- Encourage parents/carers to understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and work with them to overcome barriers to good attendance.
- Monitor attendance data rigorously to identify those children most at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with other agencies for further investigation, support and advice.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where child's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support children to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- Prepare our children for the timekeeping discipline of adult life.
- We will support children returning to school after prolonged absence.

What Welholme Academy expects from Children:

- To attend regularly and on time
- To be punctual to all lessons
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the appropriate place.

What Welholme Academy expects from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends the academy on those days it is open, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the Academy is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the Academy for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see overleaf).
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time
- To immediately inform the Academy Attendance Office / Academy if their child is unable to attend (by 9.20am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the Academy on each day of absence.
- Ensuring their child/ren arrive at school on time
- Ensure they collect their child/ren on time at the end of the school day

- Inform the Academy of any changes of contact details
- Work with the Academy if there are any barriers to good attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:25pm.

Due to current COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines to establish staggered start and end times for social distancing, our registration times are currently varied. Please see Covid- 19 arrangements on the website.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.20am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers can contact the school by telephone on 01472 329944, or alternatively leave a message on the absences section of our website at www.welholmeacademy.com

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance. The EWO may be asked to make a home visit.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents/carers can notify the Academy of medical or dental appointments at the office by bringing in an appointment card.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorised late, using the appropriate code.

Repeated lateness will be monitored daily and reported to parents/carers if there appears to be a pattern forming. Repeated lateness after the register has closed may be dealt with in the same way as absence. In the first instance a letter through the EWO will remind parents of the importance of punctuality. If lateness continues, parents will be invited to a SAP meeting. Parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice or even prosecuted in the Magistrates Court if punctuality doesn't improve.

3.5 Following up absence

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance at Welholme Academy. On a daily basis a safeguarding mentor and Attendance officer have specific responsibility for attendance across the Academy. The Academy work closely with the Education Welfare Team at Attendance Matters, to manage any attendance issues.

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Authorised absence is where the Academy has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the Academy can do this.

In the first instance the academy attendance officer will discuss with the parents the absence on the telephone or on the first day of return to school if we have been unable to contact a parent/carer. We will make the parent/carer aware at this point if the absence has been authorised.

If there is a pattern of absences a letter will be sent through the EWO reminding parents of the importance of good attendance. If absences continue, parents will be invited to a SAP meeting where 4 week targets will be set and subsequently a GAP meeting if attendance does not improve. Parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice or even prosecuted in the Magistrates Court if attendance does not improve.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Our approach and philosophy is that attendance is a partnership between home and the Academy and we aim to work with our families to ensure the best possible attendance. We are committed to working with parents to identify the best ways of ensuring the highest level of attendance possible for their child/ren and to keep them informed about their child's attendance record.

Each half term, parents will be sent an attendance certificate giving information about overall attendance percentage for their child and any unauthorised absences.

At the end of the year attendance will be recorded on the annual end of year report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances which are rare, outside the control of the family and cannot be anticipated.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Exclusion
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement of close immediate family
- Involvement in a public performance
- **Authorisation is at the Principals discretion**
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Ofsted should not criticise schools for absences of Traveller children, providing the school can demonstrate that it:

- has used the registration codes correctly
- is strategic and proactive in communicating with Traveller parents about their travelling patterns on a regular basis
- is strategic and proactive in ensuring excellent attendance when the children are not travelling

- provides distance learning materials in accordance with good practice
- provides Travelling families with the parent held education record before they travel
- includes specific guidance for Travellers in the school's attendance policy and ensures the policy is accessible to parents
- evaluates its provision for narrowing the gap in attendance for Traveller children in the school self-evaluation form
- evaluates its provision for narrowing achievement gaps for Traveller children in the school self-evaluation form

Holidays

Pupils **will not** be granted authorised absence for holidays during term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance (see definition section 4.1)

Unless authorised due to an exceptional circumstance, any holidays taken will be unauthorised and parents/ carers may be subject to legal sanctions.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay the amount stated within the penalty notice within the number of stated. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

How we respond to Absence/Lateness

ATTENDANCE FALLS BELOW 95% DUE TO UNAUTHORISED HOLIDAYS, ILLNESS OR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE. (In some incidences, this is may vary in accordance with personal circumstances).		
Step 1	Letter 1 to inform of a low level of attendance.	95% is a start for concern. This letter is to inform and advise. It starts the beginning of a monitoring period .
Case will be discussed with the Education Welfare as a record of poor attendance.		
Step 2	First attendance meeting (SAP meeting)	If attendance falls below 90%, a meeting is called with the Attendance team and Education Welfare Officer. At this meeting, targets are set and an attendance action plan is formed with the family. If the family do not attend, the plan will be made by school and sent home.
Step 3	Letter to state that sickness must be evidenced.	If a child has attendance below 90% due to an unusual amount of sickness, this letter makes it clear that they will be marked as unauthorised absences unless there is a form of medical evidence. This could be medicine prescribed, a note from the doctor or appointment card.

Step 4	Second attendance meeting (GAP meeting)	If attendance is still below 90% after the attendance action plan, a meeting is held with the Education Welfare Officer, Attendance Officer and Principal to make clear what the next steps are if attendance fails to improve. A further set of 4 week targets are set and an attendance action plan is formed with the parent. If the family do not attend, the plan will be made by school and sent home.
Step 5	First legal warning letter	This letter states that there are serious concerns regarding the child's attendance, and that, unless there is significant improvement the case will be referred to the magistrate for prosecution. This begins the final monitoring period.
Step 6	Final Legal Letter	This letter states that the school has referred the attendance case to the local authority, and that there is to be an intent to prosecute.
Step 7	Court Date	A court date is set. Evidence is filed, and a magistrate makes a decision. At this point, parents are able to present any mitigating circumstances – Including any relevant medical evidence. All parties are informed of the court decision.

Our Attendance Officer and Safeguarding Mentor monitor the attendance daily of any children who are on a Child in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan. Any absences are reported on the day of absence to the allocated social worker by telephone or email and recorded on our CPOMS system. The attendance data for the child is always recorded at any CIN/CP meetings.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Our rewards and incentives ensure that we have an emphasis on promoting and encouraging good attendance and on recognising improved attendance.

We acknowledge:

- classes with the best attendance each week
- 100% attenders each term
- 100% attenders for a specified short period eg. 20 day challenge.
- 100% attenders at the end of the school year
- Improving attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance is rewarded in class and whole school assemblies with certificates, house points, golden time and prizes throughout the year. Children are allowed to come to school in non-uniform on their birthday to encourage good attendance.

Attendance displays are updated weekly in each classroom/year group corridor and in the main school office area to promote and celebrate improving attendance.

	Children have 100% attendance	Half termly and yearly certificates. Children who have 100% attendance will be rewarded.
	Children have attendance above 95%	Children contribute to the weekly attendance award for their class – which leads to rewards.

	Improving attendance.	Weekly certificates from the principal celebrate improving attendance.
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6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above the agreed days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 90%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 90%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any child whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention will be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which will involve an attendance panel meeting and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant Academy staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the Academy, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

Staff work in partnership with the local Police, PCSO's and Social Care to support pupils and their families who have become persistent absentees.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with the Academy Improvement Committees.

Attendance data is collected on SIMS and reports are used to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principals to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Academy Improvement Committees (AIC) monitor attendance for their academies on a termly basis via the Academy Profile.

7.2 The Principal and Senior Leaders, including the Academy Improvement Committee

- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the Academy, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Will promote attendance through assemblies
- Will ensure that the Academy attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Will ensure the whole Academy ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.
- Report to the Enquire Learning Trust board of trustees
- Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience.

- Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to members of the AIC.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer/Safeguarding Mentor.

The attendance officer:

- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly, by use of the weekly Cumulative Attendance report.
- Will discuss absence and attendance concerns with children and set targets for improvement.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Will support children to improve their attendance.
- Will work with other members of staff to share information and support children and their parents/carers to improve attendance
- Will complete the Cumulative Attendance report and issue to relevant staff on a weekly basis.
- Will identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual children.
- Will provide data to the Principal, Senior Leaders and the Academy Council on a regular basis.

7.4 Class teachers

- Welcome and value the attendance of all children to lessons.
- Will ensure all children are accurately registered.
- Will ensure that children know the register is being taken.
- Will identify child absence to lessons and take appropriate action.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

7.5 Office/reception staff

- Will monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding child absence.
- Will support the Safeguarding & Attendance Officer / Learning Manager in contacting parents/carers regarding child absence.

7.6 Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- Will undertake visits on behalf of the academy
- Will support the academy to monitor absences.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years or early if required by the Director of Improvement and Effectiveness and the Principal . At every review, the policy will be shared with the Academy Improvement Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day