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Engage Academy

Attendance Policy for Pupils

September 2023



Nurturing inclusive learning communities



1	Summary	Attendance Policy for Pupils			
2	Responsible person	Adam Davies (DSL)			
3	Accountable ELT member	Alison Ward			
4	Applies to	All Staff			
5	Trustees and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy	Alison Black (Trustee) Adam Davies Alison Ward Gemma Harvey			
6	Headteachers/Service Heads who were consulted and have given approval (if applicable)	Alison Ward Ann-Marie Oliver			
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September 2022	1.0	Major policy revision	Re-write of original documentation

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to improve school attendance, improve punctuality and, as a result, raise levels of achievement. This policy is written with regard for the legal powers and duties included in the following:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458(4) & (5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010; and
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

<https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-attendance-and-absence/>

2. School Attendance, Absence and the Law

At Engage Academy we understand how important school attendance is and the impact this has on outcomes, not only academically but socially and emotionally as well. Pupils who attend school regularly benefit from fulfilling peer relationships, better academic outcomes and a vastly improved school experience which promotes successful transition onto their next stage of education.

We believe that there is a clear link between attendance and positive outcomes for children and young people. Our aim, therefore, is to encourage full attendance for all pupils at Engage Academy. We do this first by:

- Creating a warm and welcoming environment based upon nurture principals;
- Ensuring that pupils feel safe;
- Supporting positive relationships with staff and peers;
- Making education enjoyable, interesting and appropriate to every child's needs;
- Encouraging, praising and rewarding success.

Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that Engage Academy is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Engage Academy has a foundation for securing good attendance; an environment calm, orderly, safe, and supportive where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with our efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium.

It is not solely the preserve of a single member of staff, and is a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, as well as the board of trustees, the local authority, and other local partners.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All schools are required to record details of pupils' attendance and absence. They do so at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If a child is absent, it is required that parents/carers inform the academy of the reason for the absence.

The academy will record the absence under a particular category pre-set by the Department of Education (DfE). This data is then available to the attendance and pupil support service for each pupil. DfE also receives annually the overall data for each academy.

Every member of staff within Engage Academy has a responsibility to promote and support attendance.

The Senior Leadership Teams will:

- Continually monitor whole school and individual attendance;
- Implement policies and strategies to support and improve attendance;
- Review policies and procedures to ensure good practice and effective work;
- Regularly produce data to analyse attendance information and ensure procedures are in place to address issues;
- Implement a robust line management system that ensures all concerns are identified and addressed in a timely manner;
- Report to pupils and parents/carers regularly;

- Implement reward systems that motivate pupils to attend well;
- Support colleagues with systems that are accessible and ensure positive outcomes;
- Give attendance a high profile throughout the school;
- Ensure registers are accurately marked and absences appropriately coded;
- Report regularly to the CEO and Trust board.

Responsibilities of all staff:

- Work to provide an environment that is welcoming and promotes good attendance;
- Ensure relationships with pupils are positive and individual needs are identified and addressed;
- Work with parents/carers to build positive, transparent relationships;
- Contact parents/carers regularly in the case of any absence and to recognise sustained and improved attendance;
- Ensure attendance is recorded including reasons behind any absences;
- Work with the data to address any reoccurring issues or patterns (such as the same day absence every week);
- Liaise with colleagues and be aware of any related issues;
- Promote a culture of mutual respect and ensure pupils are valued every day;
- Work closely with colleagues to communicate any issues that may impact attendance;
- Meet regularly with parents/carers and related professionals to address any issues affecting attendance;
- Ensure support plans are in place that make clear the roles and responsibilities of school/parent/carer and other professionals (including the mainstream school);
- Reward good and improved attendance in a fair and equitable way ensuring parents / carers are informed.

Responsibilities of Parents

- Inform school of any circumstances that may impact on attendance;
- Attend regular review meetings and meet with staff on request;
- Arrange holidays out of term time;
- Actively promote good attendance by encouraging and supporting your child to attend;
- Make medical or other appointments out of school time unless unavoidable;
- Work with staff to implement agreed strategies and actively promote good attendance.

Responsibility of Pupils

To promote good attendance pupils will:

- Attend school punctually and regularly;
- Adhere to the Academy rules;

- Hand in any letters of absence or requests for known absence to their class teacher (including pre-arranged medical appointments).

4. The Importance of Good Attendance

As stated previously we have high expectations for our pupils and as such the expected attendance standard is 95%. Anything less than this is a concern and we take all appropriate measures to ensure we are addressing any barriers to attendance. We will always work to find solutions and promote the benefits of good attendance rather than implementing a punitive response.

8 days absence in a year = 96%. 19 days absence = 90%

- 90% attendance = ½ day missed every week;
- Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost;
- Over the 5 years at school the pupil will have missed half a year;
- What impact might this have on a child's future;
- 17 missed school days mean that secondary school pupils could drop a whole GCSE grade.

Pupils being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year;
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year;
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

We provide a healthy breakfast at our academies and we know that this starts the day positively and pupils can then focus and learn. If the pupil is late then an important part of the day is missed and this can then lead to an unsettled day. It is important that we work together to ensure pupils arrive on time and ready to learn, this is supported by transport either in our minibuses or by taxi.

We aim to ensure that all pupils recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality for the next stage of their education or training as it is a vital life skill.

Expectations for attendance

At Engage Academy, pupils and parents/carers will adhere to the following;

- Attend school for an 08.45 start time;
- Finish their school day at 14.30.

5. Attendance Rewards

At Engage Academy we understand how important it is that pupils attend and are punctual every day. We work to ensure that our pupils understand this also and that they attend school because they are aware of the benefits to them.

Our reward system is in place to further motivate pupils and to demonstrate the benefits of school attendance. The rewards available could include:

- Regular postcards and phone calls home to ensure parents/carers are kept informed.;
- Half termly reward certificates and assemblies;
- Promoting competition by comparing the attendance of the groups and rewarding the winning group;
- Inviting parents/carers to celebrate success in school half-termly at parent events;
- Considering personalised motivational strategies that will work for individuals.

6. Understanding Absences

Authorised absence:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence;
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example if a parent takes a child out of school and gives the reason that it was to go shopping for school shoes, this will not mean it is authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence:

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

7. Absence Process for Parents/Carers

If a child cannot attend school, it is parents/carers responsibility to contact the school reception on 01924 476449 on the FIRST day of absence. Engage Academy has clear procedures in place to ensure pupils attend school and the school will be in contact with parents during any periods of absence and on occasions of any prolonged absence.

Engage Academy staff will work with parents/carers from the first day of absence to ensure that any underlying issues are addressed in a timely manner with the relevant

services. Working together with parents/carers is essential to ensure good attendance and only when this working relationship is effective can we manage any issues.

If the non-attendance continues we will communicate with parents/carers and mainstream schools. In a small number of cases if there are no unmet needs that staff can work to address, we would discuss with all stakeholders whether our academies are the correct provision to meet need. For some young people the placement may not be successful and in cases where pupils are dual-registered, the referring mainstream school would consider alternatives. All related agencies would be consulted and a joint decision would be made in the pupil's best interest.

If a pupil is dual registered, an absence will be discussed with the mainstream school and siblings' schools will be contacted. A multi-agency meeting may take place and any concerns will be passed to the relevant services. If there are sufficient concerns and a pupil is not seen or a parent/carer cannot confirm their whereabouts a 101 call will be made to inform the police.

Families need to be aware any absence from school will disrupt learning. The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a holiday in term time only in "exceptional circumstances". If you consider that your request for an absence is exceptional you will need to apply to the Head Teacher in writing, 4 weeks before the date that you require the absence to start. The letter must give the dates of the absence and detail the reasons why it has to be during term time. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the absence is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school; the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In the case of an unauthorised absence, you may be requested to attend school for a formal meeting to discuss your child's place in school.

8. Concerns about Attendance

Engage Academy recognises that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and we will work with parents/carers and external agencies to support families in pupils attending school.

Staff at Engage Academy monitor attendance daily and this is reviewed further both weekly and monthly to analyse pupil attendance data and determine if support is required.

If there are concerns because a pupil is not attending on a regular basis, staff will work with parents and carers to find ways to improve attendance. If a pupils attendance falls below 90% then it will be recorded as a persistent absence.

Persistent and Severe Absence

The Government identifies persistent absence as any pupil who has attendance of less than 90%. Ethos Academy Trust recognises this figure and aspires to set this standard for all its pupils. Personalised attendance targets may be adjusted dependent on the

needs of the individual pupil. Ethos Academy Trust will put into place all reasonable measures to secure and sustain improved attendance.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated and the appropriate educational support have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is possible to constitute neglect. Should this be the case, Engage Academy will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

9. Attendance Improvement Strategy

If a pupils' attendance falls below an acceptable level, we have a variety of strategies to support reengagement and overcome barriers to attendance. Some examples of these are:

- First day calls;
- Strategy meetings;
- Liaising with other agencies;
- Transport support;
- Bespoke timetables;
- Home visits;
- Rewards for good attendance or significant progress;
- Motivational interventions;
- Liaising with external agencies.

Attendance Monitoring Programme

We implement a five-stage programme to encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality and support parents to ensure their child's attendance is exemplary. Dependent on pupil need, the stages may not be followed in consecutive order.

Stage 1 - Informal monitoring; Absence Response

Staff will follow the Absence Response flowchart (appendix 2). This will include;

- Phone calls home to ascertain reasons for absence, identify and support removal of barriers.
- Home visit(s) to discuss and agree strategies to improve attendance.
- Refer to the Senior Leadership Team if appropriate

Stage 2

Meeting 1 - Teacher

- This meeting will require parents/carers and the pupil to meet with the class teacher who will set targets and agree a plan to improve attendance;
- The improvement plan will be put into action and monitored;
- This will be reviewed after an agreed period of time and successful outcomes will be measured and recorded.

Stage 3

Meeting 2 - Senior Leader and teacher

- This will require parents/carers and the pupil to meet with the senior leader on site with responsibility for attendance;
- New targets and a plan will be agreed at this meeting;
- The improvement plan will be put into action and monitored;
- This will be reviewed after an agreed period of time and successful outcomes will be measured and recorded.

Stage 4

Meeting 3 – Head Teacher and Senior Leader

Head Teacher and Senior Leader will meet with the parents/carers and the pupil.

- This meeting will be a discussion on how prosecution for non-attendance can be avoided;
- New targets and a plan will be agreed at this meeting;
- The improvement plan will be put into action and monitored;
- This will be reviewed after an agreed period of time and successful outcomes will be measured and recorded.

Stage 5

- Processes required for prosecution will implemented, including the involvement of appropriate agencies;
- Prosecution will be authorised by the Head Teacher if appropriate evidence supports this.

10. Pupil on Part-Time Timetables

At Engage Academy all teaching and non-teaching staff have responsibility for the care of pupils who are struggling to access learning. We recognise however, that at certain stages in a child or young person's school life they may struggle to access the typical provision offered as a result of their social, emotional and mental health needs. Even when the curriculum is reasonably adapted in line with best teaching and learning practice and the young person is appropriately supported within our usual systems, there are occasions when a pupil may still struggle to access full time education. In these instances, the Head Teacher may consider that a personalised timetable is an appropriate means of supporting the young person up until the point when they are better able to access full time education.

Examples of when this is appropriate may include:

- At transition points – into or between settings;
- When the child or young person has repeated or prolonged episodes of crisis when in school;

- When a risk assessment shows that their behaviour poses a significant health and safety risk to themselves, other pupils or staff which cannot be reasonably managed within the usual day;
- When their behaviour causes repeated and significant disruption to the education of other pupils.

If the Head Teacher considers a personalised timetable is appropriate, a clear plan for this should be completed. This plan and the reasons for it, will be communicated to parents and carers along with the arrangements for its regular review.

The aim of a personalised timetable will always be to support the young person so that they can return to full time education as soon as possible. The duration will however, depend on the needs of the individual but will remain in place for the shortest time necessary.

Engage Academy will inform the Kirklees Education Safeguarding Service when using reduced timetables for pupils and follow the Kirklees reduced timetable guidance.

11. Children missing in education (CME)

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at a school (for example, at home or in alternative provision). Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) later in life. All pupils at risk of CME are reported to the Local Authority in line with relevant guidance within agreed timescales. There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education. It is vital that local authorities make judgements on a case-by-case basis. This may include children from the following vulnerable groups below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect;
- Children of Service Personnel;
- Missing children and runaways;
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System;
- Children of new migrant families;
- Children of Gypsy, Roma Traveller Families.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Effective intervention should be at the earliest opportunity in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

Action the Centre Will Take Regarding CME

At Engage Academy we appreciate that the Local Authority has a Statutory Duty to ensure that all children and young people of compulsory school age receive suitable and appropriate education. School will support the Authority in ensuring that this duty

is carried out effectively. There are specific duties in respect of Children Missing Education (CME) and there are strict guidelines in respect of both the definition of CME and the legalities of deleting a pupil from a school roll. We understand that it is essential that the DSL contact the Kirklees Education Welfare Service and complete a CME referral to inform them where any pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive days without a reason being provided for the absence. In line with Kirklees Education Welfare Service CME guidance for schools (September 2020) and Department for Education Children Missing in Education Guidance. Engage Academy will make reasonable enquiries to locate the child in line with the school's duty under section 10 of the Children's Act 2004.

Reasonable enquiries to find the child include:

- Checking with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with;
- Checking with the pupil's friends, siblings, and known relatives;
- Checking with other professionals who may be involved or have had contact with the pupil or family;
- Making telephone calls to any numbers held/identified including emergency contacts;
- Sending a letter to the last known address;
- Carrying out home visits at different times to check who is at the home address and other known addresses and check with neighbours and known friends;
- Asking for the address the family is moving to;
- Requesting copies of flight information if appropriate.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive and each case will be considered on its individual merits ensuring all the facts of the case have been taken into account. Additional enquiries to those above may be necessary. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, Engage Academy will make a referral to Children's Social Care and Police in accordance with the West Yorkshire Police Truancy policy (if appropriate).

Kirklees Children Missing Education (CME) team can be contacted via the email below:
ESS.CME@kirklees.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Absence response flowchart for Engage academy

All absences should be reported to SLT and recorded on Arbor.			
Days Absent	Contact Made	Contact not made	Additional action
1	<p>Phone call made to parent/carers by class staff member and contact entered onto School Pod/CPOMS.</p> <p>If no reason for absence arrangements made to collect pupil.</p>	<p>Text message sent to parent/carers asking them to contact Engage Academy.</p> <p>Class staff to follow up phone call at the end of the day.</p> <p>If contact is made, staff will establish reason for absence and a return date.</p>	<p>Any pupils at section 17/47/CLA – contact will be made to the social worker or refer and respond team if parents are not contactable. Further action may be taken by SLT from day 1 of absence based on individual circumstances.</p> <p>Consider placing the pupil on Attendance Monitoring Programme based on number of occasions and days absent as well as overall school attendance (below 90%).</p>
2	<p>Phone call made to parent/carers by a class staff member and contact entered onto School Pod/CPOMS.</p> <p>If no reason for absence arrangements made to collect pupil.</p>	<p>Contact not made on day 1 or day 2: further text message sent.</p> <p>DDSL/DSL informed to discuss further action including potential home visit.</p> <p>Attempt to contact extended friends and family.</p> <p>If contact is made, staff will establish reason for absence and a return date. Staff to explain importance of regular communication.</p>	
3+	<p>Daily phone calls to receive update on absence.</p> <p>If absence seems questionable then arrangements to be made for pupil to return to school.</p>	<p>Contact not made on day 1, day 2 or day 3: further text message sent.</p> <p>DDSL/DSL informed to take further action.</p> <p>Home visit made by staff member.</p> <p>Begin Child Missing in Education process.</p>	

Appendix 2 – Attendance Monitoring Programme: Improvement Plan

The purpose of the Pupil Attendance Improvement Plan is to identify the reason(s) for a pupil’s low attendance, document the previous steps taken by the school, and agree the plans necessary to improve the pupil’s future attendance. Review dates are a maximum of 4 weeks.

Pupil Name		Parent/Carer Name	
Stage (2,3,4)		Date of Plan	
Current Attendance			
Current barriers/reasons for attendance			
Actions			
Staff	Parent/carer	Pupil	Other
Attendance Target		Review Date	
Staff sign		Pupil sign	
Parent sign		Head Teacher sign	

