



# Attendance Policy



## Document Management Information

Applicable to:	All staff in all Academies and Central Support Services including individuals employed by the Trust and contractors and agency staff.  All Members and Trustees.
Dissemination:	Trust wide
Training:	Available on request
Review frequency:	Annually
Policy Author:	Barry Symons -Director of Primary & Trust Safeguarding Lead
Executive Policy Owner:	Barry Symons -Director of Primary & Trust Safeguarding Lead
Approval by:	Level 1 - Board of Directors
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## Revision History

Document Version	Description of Revision	Date Approved
0.1	Draft document	August 2024
1.0	Final Draft submitted to the Board for Approval	September 2024

# Attendance Policy

## 1. Aim of this policy

- 1.1. To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at The Howard Academy Trust.
- 1.2. This policy has been prepared with regard to the Academy's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled *Working together to improve school attendance* (2024), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

## 2. Key principles

- 2.1. High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- 2.2. It is the responsibility of everybody in the Academy to improve attendance and punctuality.
- 2.3. Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- 2.4. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. The Academy will work with pupils, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- 2.5. Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or pupils have should be discussed with the class teacher or Form Tutor. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and pupils should contact the Academy's Senior Attendance Champion.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### The Academy

- 3.1. The Academy will:
  - develop and maintain a whole academy culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance including termly explanation as to the benefits of good attendance on academic and personal progress as well as newsletter articles to reach both students and parents. Celebrating excellent and improving attendance with positive rewards including Golden Tickets, certificates, non-uniform days, canteen vouchers, activity afternoons, blazer badges. Encouraging healthy competition around attendance with weekly league figures and termly trophies. Key is our work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
  - i. investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate
  - ii. take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the Academy's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - iii. share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations<sup>1</sup> and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance

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<sup>1</sup> School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- iv. regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- v. ensure that all pupils can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- vi. ensure that the trust board and Academy's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- vii. ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance;
- viii. have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our Child Protection policy)
- ix. provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- x. regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- xi. support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence
- xii. ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- xiii. assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Academy to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion
- xiv. observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

### Parents and carers

#### 3.2. We expect parents and carers to:

- i. ensure that their child arrives at the Academy on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment
- ii. promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- iii. follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the Academy (see section 6.3 below)
- iv. avoid unnecessary absences
- v. keep the Academy informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- vi. not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.5 below)
- vii. inform the Academy in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live
- viii. observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) .

### Pupils

#### 3.3. We expect pupils to:

- i. attend the Academy regularly and on time
- ii. be punctual to all lessons
- iii. follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the Academy late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

#### 3.4. Senior Attendance Champion

#### 3.5. The Senior Attendance Champions ("SAC") at the Academies are:

- Deanwood Primary - Jane Wright, Principal

- Hurstmere School - Alison Harvey, DSL
- Miers Court Primary - Lindsay Fordyce, Principal
- Temple Mill Primary - Lisa Lewis, Principal
- Thames View Primary - Leanna Rogers, Principal
- The Abbey School - Jackie Lucas, Vice-Principal
- The Howard School - Kieran Woolmer, Assistant Principal
- Waterfront UTC - Martin McLean, Assistant Principal

3.6. The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Academy and will:

- i. set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- ii. establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that these are followed by all staff
- iii. evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- iv. have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the Academy
- v. ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and pupils
- vi. provide data and reports to support the work of the board of directors (see below).

#### The Executive Team

3.7. The Executive Team will:

- i. take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust and Academy’s ethos and policies
- ii. ensure Academy staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- iii. share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its academies
- iv. hold termly attendance review meetings with the Academy
- v. have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the trust and act as a central point for academies with attendance queries.

#### The Board of Directors

3.8. The board of directors will:

- vi. ensure the Academy’s leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- vii. regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help Academy leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most

1.1 [require the Academy to report to the trustees on the Academy’s attendance at regular intervals]

## 4. Registration

4.1. The Academy maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each pupil’s attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Academy	Phase	Morning		Afternoon	
		Start	End	Start	End
Waterfront UTC	Mon - Thurs	8.30am	9.30am	12.00	1.30
	Friday	8.30am	9.30am	11.30	12.30

- 4.2. Pupils who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where pupils arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.
- 4.3. The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the DfE Attendance Guidance.
- 4.4. Where a pupil attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

## 5. Late arrival

- 5.1. If a pupil arrives at the Academy after the relevant registration period has ended but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the Academy office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness to enable the Academy to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- 5.2. Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with behaviour policy.

## 6. Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

- 6.1. **Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the Academy has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the Academy can authorise absence.
- 6.2. **Unauthorised absence** - absence will be marked as unauthorised where the Academy is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

### Reporting absence from the Academy

- 6.3. Where a pupil is to be absent from the Academy without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the Academy by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the Academy know when they expect the pupil to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the Academy on each day of absence.
- 6.4. On the day of return to the Academy, parents must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.
- 6.5. Any unexplained absence will be followed up by the Academy promptly.
- 6.6. In cases where the academy needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parents/cares may be asked to provide the Academy with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor to support an absence for illness. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

### Appointments

- 6.7. Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- 6.8. Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil should attend the Academy for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to the academy.

### Leave of absence (*including holidays during term time*)

- 6.9. The Academy will grant permission for a pupil to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 37 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:

- i. taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
  - ii. attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment
  - iii. study leave for public examinations
  - iv. temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
  - v. other exceptional circumstances.
- 6.10. Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.
- 6.11. To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Principal and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- 6.12. Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Principal will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
- i. will be confirmed in writing
  - ii. is solely at the Principal's discretion and
  - iii. is final.
- 6.13. Where permission is granted, the Principal will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- 6.14. If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the Academy, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

### **Religious observance**

- 6.1. We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:
- 6.2. falls during school time and
  - 6.3. has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs,
  - 6.4. the absence from the Academy will be authorised.
- 6.5. We ask that parents/carers notify the Academy by writing in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

## **7. Addressing poor attendance and punctuality**

- 7.1. The Academy will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or groups of pupils who need it most. In doing so, the Academy, led by the SAC, will:
- i. monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
  - ii. provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders
  - iii. identify pupils who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
  - iv. conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends
  - v. benchmark Academy attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
  - vi. monitor the impact of academy strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
  - vii. work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
  - viii. hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of pupils who the Academy and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable

- 7.2. Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found on each Academy's website
- 7.3. Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:
  - i. a pattern of unauthorised absence
  - ii. a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
  - iii. persistent truancy or lateness
- 7.4. we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.
- 7.5. In cases where the Academy has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the pupil, a home welfare check may be carried out.
- 7.6. Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- 7.7. Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.
- 7.8. Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the Academy will signpost and support access to any additional services.
- 7.9. Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the Academy and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days, £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.
- 7.10. This will be considered when a child misses 10 unauthorised sessions in a rolling 10-week period.
- 7.11. When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:
  - i. the National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 175 - 201 of the DfE Attendance Guidance; and
  - ii. the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- 7.12. The Local Authority can issue a maximum of two penalty notices within a rolling three-year period:
  - i. First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
  - ii. Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
  - iii. Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.
- 7.13. Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand. The Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
- 7.14. In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.



7.15. Fixed Penalty notices will escalate if the absence continues to not reach the expectations or deteriorates over a rolling 3-year period.



# Attendance Procedures

School **Waterfront UTC**

## School Times

	Morning Session	Afternoon Session
<b>Start of session</b>	8.15	11.30
<b>Class Registration closes</b> <i>(Child would be L after that)</i>	9.30	13.00
<b>Registers close</b> <i>(Child would be U after that)</i>	9.31	13.01
<b>End of session</b>	11.30	15.00

## Attendance Staff

### Strategic Lead

Martin McLean (AP)

### Attendance Admin

Rebecca Buchanan

### Trust Attendance Lead

Barry Symons (ADoE)

## Pupil Absence Procedure

- Parents expected to call 01634505800 (option 1) or email ([attendance@waterfront-that.org.uk](mailto:attendance@waterfront-that.org.uk)) by 8:30am each day of absence
- Absences logged onto arbor
- Students absent with no contact have email sent home via arbor
- If still not heard a phone call is made to primary contact
- If student's absence continues without contact this is recorded and email is sent home at 3 and 5 days to inform of home visit. This is accompanied by phone calls and calling other agencies depending on students
- Those on vulnerable list are called the first day of absence.

### By whom

Parents

Attendance Officer

### Effectiveness check

Report to be run to check for missing marks

Student raised at priority intervention

Safeguarding team

### By whom

AO

MMC

SMC

## Expect

*Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are expected to maintain an attendance of 96% or above, aiming to attend everyday possible.</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer	2 week report	MMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All absences should be communicated with the school, with prior notice where possible.</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer		MMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are rewarded for good attendance via an end of year ticket to a rewards activity</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer		MMC jcl
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forms are awarded fortnightly for those with the best attendance and those with the most improved attendance</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer		MMC JCL

## Monitor

*Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of data/trends investigated and followed up, regular standing item at SLT and Governors</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer mmc	✓ Week to week monitoring to SLT – check in with link governor	MMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance with attendance manager and SLO</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer mmc	✓ Termly (data availability) check on schools standing both nationally and in local context	MMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of National and Local data via FFT and Arbor</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer mmc		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer mmc	✓ Aim to identify groups of students at risk and act upon raising standards of attendance	MMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer mmc		MMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLT standing agenda item – look at figures for week and changes. Consider any external factors (events / bus strikes and rail strikes etc). Action parental communication such as newsletter items, tutor focus on attendance in Week B emails.</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer mmc	✓ SLT briefing provides a summary of the attendance trends	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOP / Safeguarding and Attendance Teams get reports from Arbor showing absences 1 /3 / 5 /10 days. All have access to attendance dashboard.</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer mmc	✓ Arbor reports enable key staff HoY to access their attendance data in various reports for action	MMC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance is everyone's business – tutor level (alternate week phone calls to target students), teacher level, HoY, DoL/HoS, SLT</li> </ul>	Attendance Officer	✓ Aim to include everyone in the attendance narrative so we are unified in raising attendance	MMC

- PP – nationally the picture of PP is not the same, more likely SEN and low prior attainment
- 

Attendance Officer  
mmc

- ✓ PP review and embedded to raise attendance in this key group
- ✓

MMC

## Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

- Between 96%-90% form tutors are directed by HoP to have a well being discussion with students. Reporting anything of interest to HoP
- Parents are informed via email when their child's attendance is below 90% (after a reasonable period of time into the academic year) with a request to inform the school of their concerns.
- Communication regarding attendance with attendance officer is forwarded to the relevant parties

Attendance Officer

Information recorded on Rabor/Cpoms

Mmc

Attendance Officer

Weekly/Termly

Mmc

Attendance Officer

continual

mmc

## Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

- Through channels of communication, including attendance, pastoral and safeguarding we identify the relevant member of staff to offer support
- We work with and refer to external agencies including but not limited to MIND, Early help, social services, CHUMS.
- Students not able to attend school for 10 days will be referred via section 19 to the local authority to arrange alternative education
- Students may be offered support inside of school including but not limited to access to pastoral area, staff mentors, supportive reports, safe places to go.
- When attendance shows concerning patterns medical evidence may be requested in order to support absences from school.

Attendance Officer  
DSL/SEND/CO/pastoral

Daily contact with Ao and/or pastoral

Mmc

Attendance Office  
DSL/SEND/CO/pastoral

Priority Intervention

Mmc

Attendance Officer  
DSL/SEND/CO/pastoral

Priority intervention

Mmc

Attendance Officer  
DSL/SEND/CO/pastoral

Priority intervention

Mmc

Attendance Officer

reports

mmc

## Formalise support

*Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance clinics with attendance officer are offered and arranged</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance Officer</p>	<p>Arranged meetings with relevant pastoral staff</p>	<p>Mmc wwe</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This will result in an agreement of what all parties will do to improve attendance, this will be recorded and shared as a hard copy with parents</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance Officer</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with Parent to request medical evidence</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance Officer &amp;</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice to improve letter issued</li> </ul>	<p>AASSA</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referral to AASSA.</li> </ul>			

## Enforce

*Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When a student has amassed 10 periods of unauthorised absence in a 10 day period and we have exhausted any relevant support we can offer we will issue a notice to improve.</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance Officer</p>	<p>Data checked prior to weekly meeting</p>	<p>mmc</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A notice to improve will set a time period, usually of 3 weeks, over which time a student must not obtain unauthorised absence. If this does not happen a referral to AASSA will happen.</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance Officer</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If AASSA take the referral it could result in a penalty notice or a court summons</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance Officer &amp;</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holidays do not require a notice period and we will refer suspected holidays to AASSA if we have reason to suspect a holiday</li> </ul>	<p>AASSA</p> <p>Attendance Officer &amp;</p> <p>AASSA</p>		

## Standard Attendance Notifications

*Set emails alerts through StudyBugs (Primary) or Arbor (Secondary)*

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Time / Trigger</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Update of weekly/termly attendance	Parents/Students	Weekly	Letter
Attendance less than 96%	Parents/Students	attendance less than 96%	Letter
Attendance less than 90%	Parents/Students	attendance less than 90%	Letter
AASSA referral	Parents/Students	No attendance	
Improve Punctuality	Parents/Students	Punctuality of 80% in 1 week	Letter