

Attendance Policy

Trustee Body Committee responsible for review:	Full Trustees
Trustee Body Committee Approval Date:	December 2017
Initial Implementation Date:	October 2017
Review Date:	

Principles

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents/carers and staff share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Thornhill Community Academy are maximised and that the rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

Responsibilities

Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents/carers should familiarise themselves with this Attendance Policy and should work closely with the Academy staff to overcome any problems which may affect their child's attendance.

The Academy will encourage and value good attendance. The Academy will recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and will work in partnership with parents/carers and other relevant services to deal with any issues. The Academy will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with students and their parents/carers and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

The responsibility of specific Academy staff in dealing with attendance is documented in the Attendance Procedures guide (Appendix 3 – internal only).

Illness and Medical Absence

We ask that parents/carers call the Academy on 01924 324890 as soon as possible to let staff know that their child will not be in school. Parents/carers need to call every day that their child is off school.

If a student is off sick for more than a few days, or has had a number of separate days off sick, we may ask parents/carers to provide us with a doctor's note. Attendance staff may also do an unannounced home visit. The Academy has a Welfare Officer at school who can provide support with managing medical conditions and looking after a child's medication. If

parents/carers do not provide a doctor's note their child's absence may be marked as unauthorised.

If parents/carers do not call school when their child is absent staff will attempt to contact them by phone and text. Attendance staff may also make a home visit. If the Academy is unable to contact parents/carers and determine whether or not a child is safe at home staff are obliged to call the police to report the child as missing.

The Academy expects students to attend school if they are suffering from a minor illness such as a headache, cold or period pain. If parents/carers are unsure whether a child is well enough to attend school they should be sent with a note in their planner.

The Welfare Officer will assess students if they become ill during the school day. If a child is too ill to stay at school the Welfare Officer or the Head of Year will contact parents/carers to arrange for the child to go home. Staff will not allow a student to go home unless they have made contact with a parent/carer or other person listed in the student's record.

Students are not to contact parents/carers directly to say they wish to go home. If this happens parents/carers are advised to ring the Academy and check with the Welfare Office or the Head of Year to ensure the child has sought medical advice in the first instance.

Parents/carers should let the Academy know as soon as possible if their child is going to be absent for a medical or dental appointment. Parents/carers can do this by sending the appointment letter in to school with their child so a copy can be taken for the records. Parents/carers can also write a note in the student's planner or ring their Head of Year.

The Academy requests that parents/carers try as much as possible to book medical or dental appointments outside of school time as these are still counted as an absence from school. The Academy advises that students come to school in the morning prior to their appointment and return to school afterwards. The Academy will not normally authorise a full day's absence for a medical appointment.

Term Time Holidays and Leave of Absence

The Academy urges parents/carers to avoid booking family holidays during term time. It is appreciated that family holidays are enriching experiences, but the school year is designed to give families the opportunity for these breaks without having to disrupt their children's education.

The Academy strongly disapproves of students being taken on holiday in term-time as this can seriously affect their education. There is clear evidence that absence from school is linked to lower levels of attainment. Every day of school that is missed can affect a student's chance of gaining good GCSE results.

If, in exceptional circumstances, families are forced to take their child on a leave of absence during term time, the procedure is to write, in advance, to the Headteacher to ask permission for the absence. However it is highly unlikely that any such holidays will be authorised. Please obtain an absence request form from Reception or download the form from the Academy website. This form should be filled in for every occasion of planned absence of one day or more, except for medical/dental appointments.

Holidays and other trips out of area or abroad, such as to meet relatives, attend weddings or funerals, receive alternative medical treatment or take part in sporting events are all processed the same way and assessed on a case by case basis. The Academy may ask for proof of the reason for the trip – such as a letter from the sports club or from a doctor.

Absences for sporting activities are assessed on a case by case basis and may be authorised as 'approved sporting activity'. The Headteacher will take in to consideration a child's current attendance and behaviour when making a decision, and therefore the same sporting activity may be authorised for one child and not for another.

The law says that parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. If parents/carers take their child out of school during term time they are likely to receive a penalty notice (fine) from Kirklees Local Authority.

If a student is absent from school for a holiday of 20 school days or more then they will be removed from the Academy roll and they will lose their place at school. Similarly, if a child is absent from school and staff are unable to determine their whereabouts they will be considered a Child Missing Education and the local authority will be notified.

Religious Observance

The Academy will authorise up to 3 days of leave for religious observance per calendar year if the observance falls on a day which the Academy is open. Parents/carers are requested to inform the Academy if their child is going to be absent for purposes of religious observance. Although it is authorised, this will be shown on the student's record as an absence and will affect their attendance percentage. Students will not be penalised for taking authorised leave for religious observance.

Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

The Academy works very closely with the Attendance and Pupil Support Service at Kirklees Local Authority. The Academy is obliged to pass on attendance information about students to Kirklees Local Authority.

In partnership with Kirklees Local Authority the Academy operates a penalty notice system both for term time holiday absences and poor attendance. The penalty notice is for £60, for each parent/carer of each child, if paid within 28 days, and £120 if paid after this date but within 42 days. Failure to pay may also result in parents/carers being called to appear in court.

The Academy will look at all unauthorised absences on a case by case basis before deciding on the appropriate course of action. However, as a guide, parents/carers are likely to receive a penalty notice if a child's attendance drops below 95% (with 5% unauthorised absence). The Academy will notify parents/carers in advance if taking this course of action and then parents/carers will hear in due course from Kirklees Local Authority once they have processed the penalty notice.

Should a child's attendance drop below 90%, despite the Academy's best efforts to work with parents/carers, the Academy would begin the prosecution process. If Kirklees Local

Authority decide to prosecute parents/carers based on the evidence that the Academy provides then parents/carers would be expected to attend court and may face a fine of up to a maximum of £2500. There is also a chance that a community order could be put in place and you may face a 3 month jail sentence. Parents/carers could receive a criminal record.

Attendance and Safeguarding

If a student is not at school and parents/carers haven't informed the Academy that the student will be absent this then becomes a safeguarding concern.

In the first instance staff will attempt to contact parents/carers by telephone or text message. If staff are unable to determine the student's whereabouts then it may be necessary for attendance staff to do an unannounced home visit.

If staff are still unable to determine the student's whereabouts and believe there is a risk to the child's safety or wellbeing then the police will be contacted.

It is vital that parents/carers keep the Academy up to date with contact details – phone numbers, address, email address and additional people to contact – to ensure staff can speak to parents/carers in this situation.

If a student has been absent for a significant period of time and the Academy has been unable to contact parents/carers then the child will be considered a Child Missing Education. Kirklees Local Authority will be contacted and will undertake their own investigation to determine whether the child is on holiday or has left the area.

If a student has been absent for 20 school days or more and the Academy is unable to determine their whereabouts then they will be removed from roll and lose their place at the Academy.

If parents/carers inform the Academy that they are taking their child abroad during term time (see Term Time Holidays and Leave of Absence section for more details) the Academy may ask for proof of travel for safeguarding purposes.

Levels of Attendance

100%	Outstanding	An excellent achievement
95-99%	Good	The Academy target is 96%
90-94%	Requires Improvement	A student with 90% attendance every year at high school will have missed half a year overall
89% and below	Inadequate	A student with 80% attendance every year at high school will have missed a whole year overall

Parents/carers will be regularly notified about their child's attendance percentage.

Parents/carers will be invited to work with attendance staff if their child's attendance

percentage drops below 95%.

Rewards and Sanctions

Students with Exceptional and Good attendance will be rewarded.

Students who arrive to Period 1 after 8.40am are deemed late to the Academy will receive a same-day 30 minute detention at 2.45pm. Parents/carers will be notified of this by text message.

2017-2018 Academic Year - Calculations

There are 190 school days in the academic year. These are spread as follows:

Half-Term	First Day	Last Day	Weeks	Days
1	04/09/2017	20/10/2017	7	33 (2 x INSET Day)
2	30/10/2017	22/12/2017	8	40
3	08/01/2018	16/02/2018	6	30
4	26/02/2018	29/03/2018 (Thu)	5	24
5	16/04/2018	25/05/2018	6	29 (1 x Bank Holiday)
6	04/06/2018	20/07/2018	7	34 (1 x INSET Day)

1% over the whole academic year is 1.9 days.

To achieve 95% attendance over the whole school year a student needs to be absent for no more than 9.5 days.

To achieve 90% attendance over the whole school year a student needs to be absent for no more than 19 days.

Attendance is also looked at on a half-termly basis. To achieve 95% attendance during the first half-term a student needs to be absent for no more than 1.5 days. To achieve 90% attendance a student needs to be absent for no more than 3 days.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Information for Parents/Carers

This is a guide for parents/carers on attendance at the Academy.

Appendix 2 – Absence Request Form

This is the form which parents/carers should use to request term time holidays and absences.

Appendix 3 (Internal Only) – Attendance Procedures

This document details staff roles and responsibilities, attendance codes and absence procedures.

EQUALITY IMPACT AUDIT AND ACTION PLAN

Put X in the PLUS column to indicate if you judge that the policy has a positive impact on a group.

Put X in the neutral column to indicate if you judge that the policy has a neutral impact on a group.

Put X in the MINUS column to indicate if you judge that the policy has a negative impact on a group.

In making a judgement *due regard* has been paid to the requirement to:

- i. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
- ii. Advance equality of opportunity
- iii. Foster good relations

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS		PLUS	NEUTRAL	MINUS	ACTION
1	Age		X		
2	Disability		X		
3	Gender Reassignment		X		
4	Marriage and Civil Partnership		X		
5	Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
6	Race		X		
7	Religion or Belief	X			
8	Gender		X		
9	Sexual Orientation		X		
Other					