

# ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY 2017

## THE THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY

Last review: January 2017

Next Review Date: January 2018

### **RATIONALE**

At The Thomas Alleyne Academy, we want the whole academy community – governors, staff, parents and students – to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Regular school attendance is an indicator of good health, a sense of well-being and engagement and enjoyment of learning crucial to a student's performance. Good attendance helps the young people in this Academy community to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

### *Aims*

The Thomas Alleyne Academy aims to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. It will endeavour to make the Academy a place that is safe, welcoming and caring and that provides engaging lessons where learning is challenging and enjoyable.

All members of The Thomas Alleyne Academy community are expected to contribute to the setting of the highest standards for attendance and punctuality and model the highest standards of attendance and punctuality.

Government target for attendance is 95%. The Thomas Alleyne Academy's commitment is to do all that we can to reach attendance figures of 100%, to minimise unauthorised absence and reduce persistent absence in order that all students are assisted in reaching their potential.

### *POST 16 Rationale*

We expect students to have 100% attendance to their registration, lessons and tutorials. Continuation to Year 13 will be conditional upon having satisfied these requirements as well as making satisfactory progress in all subjects. Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis and students will be contacted if an unsatisfactory pattern is emerging. Students not in class will be telephoned. Parents may be invited to a meeting and the situation discussed. If students fail to meet the targets set for attendance or improvement they may not be entered for examinations and may also find they are no longer able to continue the existing programme of study.

## EXPECTATIONS

The Academy is proactive in promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. The pastoral team and teaching staff are particularly focussed on working with students to actively encourage them to develop positive attitudes to school so that students want to attend and engage in their learning. The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and students:

- The Thomas Alleyne Academy will provide a safe learning environment, will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis, and will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality. They will contact home on the first day of absence if they have not heard from parents or carers and follow up written confirmation of absence for a student file. They will contact home immediately a student is missing from a lesson.
- Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly in accordance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996. They should ensure their child attends punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. Parents will inform the Academy of any reason for their child's absence from school on the first day of absence. They should maintain regular communication with Academy staff where necessary and ensure that the Academy is informed of any changes of contact details. Parents will avoid making medical appointments during the school day and arranging family holidays during term time.
- Students are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually, fully equipped and ready to learn. They must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to the relevant person and bring a note or appointment card to school if they need to leave for an appointment. Students are expected to catch up work missed and home learning set while they were absent. Students will not leave the Academy premises without permission.

Clear expectations of attendance and punctuality are communicated, promoted and supported through Academy policies and documentation and are displayed in the reception area. They are included in the Home School Agreement. Expectations for attendance and punctuality will be referred to and communicated in assemblies, in tutor time and in the Academy newsletter, Students will be encouraged to monitor their attendance in their planner and parents will given up-to-date information on their child's attendance on each half-termly Snapshot as well as at parents' evenings. Good attendance will be promoted through competition and one-hundred percent attendance will be acknowledged with a postcard home and at the half-termly celebration assembly.

## **INTERVENTION**

Should a student's attendance fall to 95% or below, parents will be notified in writing. Should their attendance continue to fall, parents will receive further notification and medical evidence will be required to authorise any further absences. At this stage, parents will be invited for a meeting with the Academy to improve their child's attendance and punctuality before it reaches the level where a fixed penalty notice could be issued. The Government deems attendance below 90% to be persistent absence.

Parents will be notified of their child's lateness via a text message and will receive notice of persistent lateness via a letter each half term.

Action plans and clinics will be put in place to support improved attendance in conjunction with the Attendance Improvement Officer. In the event of persistent offenders, the Local Authority may take court action in addition to issuing fixed penalty notices.

## **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

Governors will regularly put monitoring of attendance and punctuality on their meeting agenda and ensure that high levels of attendance and punctuality are recognised by the Academy.

The Academy will review the policy and its implementation and effectiveness on an annual basis, taking into account relevant data, including information on student progress, views expressed through parents' contact with the Academy, analyses of the attendance data, reports from SEN and inclusion teams and reports by the Attendance Improvement Officer.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Thomas Alleyne Academy believes that good school attendance assists children and young people to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. Through working together, we believe that we can ensure students have excellent attendance at school that will result in high standards of achievement.

### *Appendices*

- Academy routines
- Attendance monitoring ladder
- Leave of absence during term time, including application form
- Fixed Penalty Notices

### *Linked Policies*

- Behaviour for Learning
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- Anti-Bullying
- Teaching and Learning

## ACADEMY ROUTINES

### *Doors open*

- Academy doors open at 8.00am. Students may enter the building at that time
- They should not be on site before 7.45am
- Breakfast Club opens at 8.00am
- The bell for moving to form for registration is rung at 8.25am

### *Registration*

- Registers are recorded on Sims and are marked in accordance with Academy policy.
- The morning register is taken at 8.30am and closes at 9.00am.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 2.10pm. The register for Period 5 lesson is used for this purpose.
- Any student arriving after closure of register at 9.00am will be marked absent for the whole of the session.
- Registers codes will be used in accordance with Department of Education requirements

### *Lateness*

- Any student arriving after 8.30am should attend their tutor registration or assembly immediately where their tutor will mark them late
- A member of the Pastoral team will be on late duty each morning between 8.30am and 8.40am.
- Parents should ensure that the Academy know if their child travels to school by bus in order that we may contact the bus company in the event of bus lateness.
- Any student arriving after 8.40am should report to reception giving their reason for lateness.
- Lateness after the register has closed at 9.00am is considered to be absence for the whole of the session. The Academy may make exceptions to this rule in the event of special circumstances, for example extreme weather and road closures.
- If your child is persistently late for school, they will be required to attend punctuality workshops. A student will be required to attend a workshop if they are **late 4 times in half a term**. If they are late a further four times, they will attend the next workshop, and so on. A student who is **late three times in one week** will attend the workshop at the level they have reached.

**Workshop 1** – will be at lunchtime. Students will analyse their attendance certificates to identify patterns and total amount of time missed.

**Workshop 2** – will be after school. Students will complete a questionnaire about punctuality and develop an action plan to change their behaviour

**Workshop 3** – will also be after school and parents will be required to attend. Parents and students will develop strategies to address the punctuality issue at home as well as writing an employer reference.

**Workshop 4** – will be during school hours and parents will again be required to attend and to meet with the Herts County Council Attendance Improvement Officer assigned to the Academy. The purpose of the meeting will be to identify issues affecting your child's punctuality that we have not previously been able to resolve and to identify possible support from external agencies.

## *Absences*

- Notification must be provided by parents/carers for all absences from school, including a phone call to the school's Attendance Officer on the first day with a reason provided for the absence.
- On return to school, the parent should send the child in with a letter from home or a note in the planner explaining the reason for their child's absence.
- The letter/note should be given to the child's tutor who will pass it to the Attendance Officer where it will be kept on file for a year. The Attendance Officer will enter the details in Sims and will follow up any missing notes in writing.
- Absences are authorised by the school's Attendance Officer, the Progress Coordinator, the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.
- The Academy may decide not to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided.
- The Academy usually authorises absence for sickness, unavoidable medical appointments, days of religious observance and exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement, examinations, moving house.
- The Academy will not authorise absence, unless medical evidence is provided, once attendance drops below 93%.
- The Academy does not authorise absence for family holidays, parent-condoned absence where the school does not agree there is a satisfactory reason for absence, truancy, when support has been offered by the school to alleviate difficulties, or during disputes.

## *Leave of Absence During Term Time*

The Government only allows schools to authorise a leave of absence during term time in 'exceptional circumstances' as any absence impacts directly on achievement.

- Any request for a leave of absence must be addressed in writing to the Principal who will only authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- The Headteacher would determine how many days would be appropriate if the 'exceptional circumstances' were authorised
- A retrospective request for a leave of absence in term time will not be granted.
- A leave of absence that has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised absence and may be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued where the leave of absence results in 15 or more sessions absent in the current and previous school term.
- A letter confirming whether the request for a leave of absence has been authorised or denied will be sent to the parent within one week of the request.

## *Following up absences*

- If no reason has been provided for a student's absence by 9am. on the first day of an absence, a parent will receive a text from the academy generated by Truancy Call requesting them to contact the academy.
- If there has been no contact from the parent within 3 days, a letter will be sent to the address on file. And if the academy has still not received any contact after 5 days, they will contact the local authority.
- Parents whose child's attendance falls to 95% will be notified by the academy in writing.

- If attendance falls further to 93%, parents will receive a letter stating that we will no longer authorise absence without medical evidence and inviting them for a meeting. The student may develop an action plan with their tutor and/or Progress Coordinator.
- Should attendance continue to fall, with medical evidence, the student will be provided with additional support through their student support worker, Inclusion TA and/or the Learning Support Unit.
- Should attendance fall by a further 6 unauthorised sessions, without medical evidence, parents will receive a letter warning them that a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued if attendance continues to fall.
- After a further 7 unauthorised sessions, the Principal may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to those parents who are deemed as not cooperating with the Academy's efforts to help their child improve their attendance.
- If the student's attendance does not improve sufficiently, the student will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer.
- If a student's attendance continues to fall, the parent may be taken to court.

### *Supporting students with attendance difficulties*

- If a student is required to be off school for medical reasons, e.g. an operation, the Academy will provide work to the tutor organised by the medical team at the hospital concerned if required.
- If a student is unable to attend school long term due to health-related issues documented with medical evidence, the Academy will make a referral to the Education Support Team for Medical Absence (ESTMA).
- A student will be supported with a reintegration plan organised by the Learning Support Unit when they return after a long-term absence.
- If a student is at risk of becoming a 'school refuser', the Academy will provide support within school to encourage attendance and may involve external agencies where appropriate.
- A student will be supported within school and via external agencies if appropriate for exceptional domestic carer circumstances.

### *Leaving school during the day*

Students who are required to leave the Academy premises during the school day, are required to sign out at reception. They must provide a note from home, a medical appointment card, or a note from their Progress Coordinator or the Attendance Officer. The receptionist will provide the student with a sign-out slip to hand to a Truancy Officer should they be approached outside of the school. On return to the Academy, the student must sign in again at reception who will notify the Attendance Officer.

### *Medical Appointments*

While the Academy recognises that it is difficult to obtain convenient medical or dental appointment times, we would encourage parents to avoid making appointments during school time. A copy of the letter from the medical practitioner or the appointment card is required by the Academy to authorise the absence.

### *Truancy*

- The Thomas Alleyne Academy works with parents, students and staff to reduce truancy. The Academy uses First Day Response software. If a student is missing from registration and Period 1 in the morning, with no reason provided for their absence, the Attendance Officer will send a truancy alert to parents in accordance with the current data on Sims.
- Should a student be missing from lessons during the day without a known reason, the Academy will search for the child and call home.
- The Thomas Alleyne Academy works with other professionals to minimise truancy by individual students and to prevent condoned truancy, for example when a parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home.

### *Legal Action*

#### **Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)**

At The Thomas Alleyne Academy we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. However, if a parent fails to cooperate with the Academy or if a child's attendance fails to improve for no approved reason, then the Academy may issue a fixed penalty notice.

- If a student has 15 or more sessions (a half day is equal to 1 session) of unauthorised absence within a term or two consecutive terms then the Principal may ask the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.
- If paid, the parent discharges potential liability for non-attendance of their child at school
- Unauthorised absence is not restricted to an academic year; unauthorised absence from the summer term will carry over into the autumn term.
- A school may request up to two FPNs per student in a school year
- An FPN may be issued for persistent lateness where a student arrives after 9.00 a.m. as one late arrival without valid reason is equal to one unauthorised absence. A warning letter would be sent once the student accrues 6 unauthorised sessions due to lateness.

#### **Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)**

The Thomas Alleyne Academy works in partnership with the allocated AIO from the Local Authority to improve attendance for individual students and the whole school. The school attendance officer meets with the AIO on a regular basis and the Academy has an integrated approach to working with individual students and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO, the Academy will make a formal referral to Children's Services for safeguarding purposes.

The Headteacher may request the Attendance Improvement Officer issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to those parents who are not cooperating with attempts to help them improve their child's attendance. The Academy will also support the AIO to compile evidence in order to undertake legal action in the Magistrates Court (under section 444 of the Children Act 1996) or apply for an educational supervision order relating to

the student under section 36 of the Education Act 1989 – taking into account any mitigating circumstances as identified by the Academy.

## COMMUNICATION

Our expectations for attendance and punctuality are communicated and promoted through:

- Academy policies
- The Academy prospectus
- The Home School Agreement
- The Academy Code of Conduct
- Staff handbook
- Primary to secondary transition booklets
- The Academy newsletter
- Student planners
- The pastoral support programme including tutor time
- Assemblies
- Student Parliament
- Display boards
- General communication with parents/carers ie letters and information booklets
- Information evenings, parent/carers consultation evenings and special events – particularly those focussing on presentation of rewards for excellent attendance and punctuality

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the role of all staff to promote the reason for good attendance at school. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in courts cases.

### *Form Tutor*

- Daily:**
- Take a register at 8.30am and mark students present, absent or late
  - Close the register at 9.00 a.m. so that Truancy Call can be run
  - Keep a record of absence notes and planner notes on the Aide Memoire Sheet
  - Check attendance data using the SIMS Attendance Programme
  - Discuss attendance and punctuality issues with individual members of the form.
  - Motivate the form regarding attendance and punctuality, including promoting the attendance competitions
- Weekly:**
- Ensure students record their attendance in their planner.

### *Attendance Officer*

**Daily:**

- Checks attendance phone line for messages
- Inputs absence reasons on Sims
- Sends truancy call and amend registers accordingly
- Monitors persistently late students
- Amend SIMS register for latecomers immediately
- Monitor Lesson Monitor

**Weekly:**

- Runs attendance reports for tutors
- Runs attendance report for SLT and Progress Coordinators
- Sends out letters in accordance with attendance monitoring ladder after discussion with the Assistant Headteacher for Guidance & Support
- Produce 'late spreadsheet' for Form Tutors, Progress Coordinator and Assistant Headteacher for Guidance & Support
- Create report of those students who have been late and identify those needing to attend workshops
- Receive all absence notes, amend register accordingly and file note
- Chase up missing absence notes
- Meet with students with attendance issues.
- Attend meetings with AIO and meet with Progress Coordinator and Assistant Headteacher to discuss individual issues and patterns causing concerns

**Half-termly:**

- Provide attendance and persistent absence figures for the SEF
- Issue postcards for 100% attendance

**As needs basis:**

Delete student names from register via attendance manager if:

- The student has ceased to attend school and the parent has satisfied the authority that he/she is receiving efficient full time education other than attending school
- The student's ordinary residence has transferred to a place where the school is not accessible
- The student is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend
- The student has been permanently excluded from school
- The student has transferred to another school and the academy has received written notification of such.
- The student has died
- The student has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than four weeks and the academy and attendance improvement officer have failed to obtain the cause of absence

Prepare notes for court proceedings

### *Subject Teachers*

**Daily:**

- Take a register at the start of every lesson and mark students

present, absent or late

- Cross check absence against previous lessons and if in doubt about a student's absence, inform the Attendance Officer or on-call

**As needs basis:** Provide work as required for students who are absent for an extended authorised period, in the Learning Support Unit, in the Inclusion Room, or fixed-term excluded.

### *Progress Coordinator*

- Weekly:**
- Monitors attendance data using reports from Attendance Officer
  - Meet with students to discuss reasons for the fall in attendance
  - Promote good attendance and attendance competition at assemblies
  - Discuss student concerns with Assistant Headteacher at line-management meetings

**As needs basis:** • Prepare notes for court proceedings

### *Member of Senior Leadership Team*

- Promotes an ethos of good attendance through assemblies, competitions and displays
- Develops strategies to improve attendance
- Monitors school attendance figures on the Academy SEF and reports to SLT meetings and Governors' Committee

### *Attendance Improvement Officer*

- Consult with Progress Coordinators and Attendance Officer at timetabled meetings monthly to identify students who are experiencing attendance difficulties
- Agree of time-limited focussed action as preliminary work before taking up a referral
- Feedback work and exchange information in relation to casework
- Advise the Academy on strategies for improving attendance
- Follow up cases where strategies from Academy have not improved attendance/punctuality to include letters and in-school meetings to emphasise the need to improve attendance and the possible courses of action if that does not occur
- Undertake casework with students and parents including home visits, organise specific support from other services and agencies for the student and family, organise case conferences
  - Follow-up instances of students absent from school for more than 4 weeks and whom subsequently cannot be traced
  - Arrange for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by the Headteacher

- Undertake legal action in the Magistrates Court (under section 444 of the Children Act 1996) or apply for an educational supervision order relating to the student under section 36 of the Education Act 1989 – taking into account any mitigating circumstances as identified by the Academy.

### *Governors*

- Monitor and evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the policy and procedures via the Committee and report to the Full Governing Body.

## REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

A wide range of rewards and sanctions are used to promote highest standards of attendance and punctuality. Sanctions are applied for students arriving late for school, without good reason.

	Reward example
100% attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By form in a week – a gold token</li> <li>- By individual each half term – postcard home and mention in Celebration Assembly</li> </ul>
Excellent attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Certificate presented at end of year Achievement Assembly</li> </ul>
Ongoing attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By Form and year group – Punctuality and attendance shared with tutors each week</li> <li>- Selection for extracurricular activities or alternative provision such as college requires excellent attendance</li> <li>- Selection for positive conduct day during enrichment week requires attendance of 95% or higher</li> </ul>
Improved attendance/punctuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Postcard home</li> <li>- Certificate for improved attendance at end of year Achievement Assembly</li> </ul>
	Sanction example
Late to school/Tutor time/Assembly	Reprimand/Dialogue  Text home
Persistent lateness to school	Punctuality Workshops 1-4  Fixed Penalty Notice if after 9 am
Non attendance to lesson	Detention for truancy
Late to lesson	Reprimand  Break or lunchtime detention to make up time
Repeated offence ie late to more than one lesson or for series of lessons	Punctuality report  Phone call to parents/carers



## Attendance Monitoring Ladder

100%

**Exemplary** attendance – postcards sent home each term

97%

**Excellent** attendance –  
certificate awarded at end of year if met or exceeded

95%

Minimum target attendance. **First warning** letter regarding falling attendance.

93%

**Second warning** letter – states that we will no longer authorise absence without medical evidence and warns of Fixed Penalty Notice

6 further  
unauthorised  
absences

**Formal notice** that an FPN will be issued

9 further  
unauthorised  
absences

**FPN issued** within 10 days (where 15 unauthorised sessions are in current and/or previous term)

1 absence = ½ a day  
1 day absent = 2 absences

## **APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

As a Parent or carer, you should fill in this form if you need to request a leave of absence to take your child out of school during term time. Schools may authorise a leave of absence during term time only in 'exceptional circumstances' as any absence impacts directly on achievement. Parents or carers should not expect such leave to be granted as of right. Permission will not be given if it is applied for after the leave of absence has taken place.

Normally, a student shall not be granted more than 5 days' leave of absence in any academic year.

After completing the form, please return it to the Principal no less than three (3) weeks' before the date when you want the period of absence to start.

The conditions under which a leave of absence may be granted are contained in Reg. 8 of The Education (Pupils Registration) Regulations 1995 and Sections 38-42 of School Attendance, Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence 2004.

I request that ..... (Name of Child)  
Form: .....

Be granted leave of absence from: ..... to .....

Reason:

.....  
.....

I will ensure that my son/daughter will catch up all missed work.

I understand that should my child's attendance fall below 93% I will need to supply medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any absence.

I understand that should my child have 15 unauthorised sessions of absence the school may ask County to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Signature of Parent/Carer .....

Date: .....