



The Thomas Alleyne Academy

Policy Title: Attendance and Punctuality
Date of Construction: April 2012
Type of Policy: School
Responsible Author: C Tyrwhitt
Review Date: February 2016
Review By: SLT, Govs,
Approved: February 2016

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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.

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 and their learning so that students want to come to school and to 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 through termly rewards and the annual achievement 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 high attendance at school and this 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 8.00 am. Students may enter the building at that time. They should not be on site before 7.45 am.
- Breakfast Club opens at 8.00 am.
- The bell for moving to form for registration is rung at 8.25 am.

Registration

- Registers are recorded on Sims and are marked in accordance with Academy policy.
- The morning register is taken at 8.30.am and closes at 9.00 a.m.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 2.10 p.m. The register for Period 5 lesson is used for this purpose.
- Any student arriving after closure of register at 9.00 a.m. 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 8.30 a.m. 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 8.30 and 8.40 a.m.
- 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 8.40.am should report to reception giving their reason for lateness.
- Lateness after the register has closed at 9.00 am 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 a child is late to school, they are required to early report at 8.15 the following morning in the Pastoral Office. Their parents will be texted with this information. Parents of persistent offenders may be contacted by their Progress Coordinator and a sanction will be put in place. If there is no improvement they will be required to make up the time missed after school on the same day. Failure to comply will result in a higher level sanction being given for defiance.

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 Assistant Principal or the Principal.
- 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 most 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.

Following up absences

- If no reason has been provided for a student's absence by 9 a.m. 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, eg. 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.
- Condoned truancy, for example when a parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home.

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

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	- By form in a week – a small prize - By individual in a week – entry into a termly draw - By individual each term – postcard home
Excellent attendance	- Certificate presented at end of year Achievement Assembly
Ongoing attendance	- By House – Display in House Boards, Recognition in Assembly - By Form - House Points - Selection for extracurricular activities or alternative provision such as college requires excellent attendance - Selection for positive conduct day requires attendance of 95%
Improved attendance/punctuality	- Letter/postcard home - Certificate for improved attendance
	Sanction example
Late to school/Tutor time/Assembly	Reprimand Early reporting Text home
Persistent lateness to school	Pastoral Detention Punctuality Report Same Day Detention for length of lateness Letter home Fixed Penalty Notice
Non attendance to lesson/tutor time/assembly	Reprimand Pastoral Detention Phone call home Parent/carers meeting
Late to lesson	Reprimand Call home Break or lunchtime detention
Repeated offence ie late to more than one lesson or for series of lessons	Department detention Attendance and punctuality report Letter/phone call to parents/carers

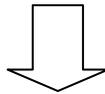
Attendance monitoring ladder



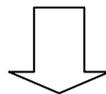
Excellent attendance – postcards sent home each term



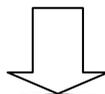
Minimum target attendance – certificate awarded at end of year if exceeded



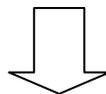
First warning letter regarding attendance being too low



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



formal notice that an FPN will be issued



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

1 day absent = 2 absent sessions

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 Principal 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.

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:

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 Principal 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.