

Attendance Policy for Academies

1 August 2024 – 1 July 2025

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Date	Description
November 2023	Current Version
May 2024	Update to statutory guidance – effective 19 August. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement to keep registers electronically • Requirement to share daily attendance with DfE • Extended requirement to retain information for 6 yrs • New absence codes Updated information about penalty notices in line with new national framework

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1. Aims

The University of Chichester Academy Trust is committed to inspiring all young people with an excellent education that raises their aspirations and enriches their lives. To do this we must all work together to strive towards every child attending as much of their education as possible so they can meet their true potential. This endeavour will be a partnership between the Trust, our Academies, Local Authorities, parents, carers and pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees and its Local Governing Bodies

The Board of Trustees and its Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's and its academies' policies and ethos
- Making sure leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Facilitating the sharing of good practice across academies
- Holding leaders to account for the implementation of this policy through the Standards and Curriculum Committee of the Board and its Local Governing Bodies.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the Trust and governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Apply for fixed-penalty notices to be issued, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers and the relevant Local Authority
- Work actively with local partners to deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Rob Jones and can be contacted via telephone on the school office number.

3.4 Staff responsible for attendance in Trust academies

The Trust has a number of different role-profiles covering responsibility for attendance. Leaders will ensure that the following responsibilities are allocated to the relevant staff and reflected in their job descriptions:

- Take calls/messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the relevant system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Senior Leadership Team or Pastoral Lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with external partners to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information using the agreed procedure by 8:30am every day.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day as expected, on time
- Call the academy or use any online systems to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and that where this is not possible, their child attends before and after the appointment
- Inform leaders of any factors that may be affecting their child's attendance
- Discuss any planned absences in advance of making any arrangements
- Supply medical or other evidence when requested to account for their child's absence
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance (see 5.1)
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Take an active role in working with the academy staff to improve attendance where concerns are raised
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered by partners, including any attendance contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Admission and Attendance registers

We will keep an admission and attendance register electronically and place all pupils onto this register.

The admission register must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the academy along with their starting date, information regarding parents and details of the school last attended. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register in accordance with regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Data must be retained for six years from the data of entry.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. This information will be shared as required with the DfE and other agencies. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive by 8:30am on each school day, however gates will be open from 8:25am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am and will be kept open until 9:00am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:30.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. (see also section 7).

Please see [website](#).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment via the School Office Team.

Please collect a Leave of Absence Form from the office (LOAF)

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- You may be asked to attend a meeting with the Pastoral Team and/or Attendance Officer to support any lateness.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the academy will:

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving other partners in the case.
- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may consider this a safeguarding concern and use the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The academy will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via a medical 1 followed by a medical 2 letter if attendance continues to be low.

In the Trust we define attendance using the following scale:

- High $\geq 98\%$
- Good $\geq 95\%$, but $< 98\%$
- Low $\geq 90\%$, but $< 95\%$
- Persistently absent $\geq 50\%$, but $< 90\%$
- Severely absent $< 50\%$

This can also be expressed in terms of days missed:

- 95% attendance = 10 school days missed
- 90% attendance = 19 school days missed
- 85% attendance = 29 school days missed
- 80% attendance = 38 school days missed
- 75% attendance = 47 school days missed

As a Trust we use a range of approaches to improve attendance of pupils who miss more than 1 in 10 of their lessons, including:

- Regular home visits
- Relational attendance meetings
- Referral to Early Help
- Drawing up an Attendance Plan with families
- Providing support from dedicated support workers

We respond to thresholds of absence as follows:

A school day is made up of two sessions, the morning session and the afternoon session.

Threshold	Response
5 missed sessions	Medical 1 letter will be sent home to parent/carer
10 missed sessions	Medical 2 letter will be sent home to parent/carer
More than 10 missed sessions	This may result in a meeting with the pastoral team and/or attendance officer. Failure to attend and/or engage with our attendance procedures and policies could result in further legal action potentially being taken.

As a Trust, we consider attendance at school to be a parents' responsibility and we do not routinely reward attendance individually, as it is rarely within a pupil's control. We do however have an attendance trophy for the class with the best weekly attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an event which cannot take place at any other time and is in the child's best interest to attend. Such absences are likely to be extremely rare, unavoidable and of the shortest possible duration. A family holiday is highly unlikely to fall within this definition.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be discussed with the academy as soon as it is anticipated, before any arrangements are made and the LOAF submitted, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Any other absence which meets our definition of 'exceptional circumstances' above
- Any arrangements agreed with the academy for flexi-schooling, study leave or similar.

5.2 Part time timetables

In agreeing a part time timetable, leaders are agreeing to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must be recorded as an absence in line with agreed coding.

Part time timetables should:

- Have the agreement of the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with
- Only be used in exceptional circumstances
- Have a clear ambition to reintegrate to full time education including an end date and review dates
- Be communicated to Children's Social Care if the pupil has a social worker and in all cases to the relevant Local Authority.
- Only be agreed for a period of 6 weeks, as per the Local Authority guidelines.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The academy will ask the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice to parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Penalty notices are issued per parent, per child.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £80 per child within 21 days or £160 per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days following the National Framework for issuing penalty notices. If unpaid after 21 days this will result in a prosecution. Two penalty notices may be issued for the same child for repeat offences within a three year period.

If a third offence occurs within three years of the first offence, the third case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court for prosecution, which can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500. Cases found guilty can show on parents' future DBS certificate. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, who process the payment. This money does not come to the Trust or the academy.

The Trust expects Headteachers to apply to their local authority, where appropriate, to issue a fixed penalty notice where a child has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more (five days) over a rolling ten week period., which can span different terms or school years.

The decision on whether or not to request a penalty notice may take into account:

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Other powers available for local authorities and academies can include

- A Parenting Order which can mean parents or carers must attend a parenting class, counselling or guidance sessions and undertake any other actions directed by the court
- An Education Supervision Order which means a council will appoint a supervisor to help a parent or carer get their child into education
- Taking forward a prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate

6. Attendance monitoring

The Trust expects all its academies to use a management information system which provides information on absence and attendance patterns for individuals, groups and whole cohorts. This information is used to report to the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies with an analysis of any trends, concerns or evidence of successful approaches to improving attendance.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

Academy leaders will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Local Governing Body. The Trust will aggregate this data and report it to the Trust Board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

Academy leaders will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. This will take into account any temporary part time timetables agreed with parents in order to meet their child's needs.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Aggregate academy-level data across the Trust to identify any common concerns or outstanding practice.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Use appropriate strategies set out in paragraph 4.6 of this policy.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by The Director of Standards and Effectiveness. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees through its Curriculum and Standards Committee.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Appendix 2: attendance codes from August 19th 2024

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.

W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.
C1		Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2		Leave of absence for a pupil of compulsory school age subject to a part-time timetable
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	A leave of absence for a family holiday is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		

G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the school. It can also be used where the pupil is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to your attendance figures.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.