

ATTAIN ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP



Attendance Policy

October 2017

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Approved by the Attain Trust Board

Signed:

Date:

Date of Next Review: October 2019

Pupil Attendance Policy

1. Introduction and Background

ATTAIN Academy Partnership recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this Trust that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the Head of School/Headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy has been developed in consultation with Trustees, Local Governors, teachers, the Local Authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the Trust's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Attain Academy Partnership Board of Trustees has agreed this policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust.

2. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of Trust staff.

To help us all to focus on this each member academy will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in Academy newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.

- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the Trust's target for attendance.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance.

2.1 Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the Academy (not by the parent/carer), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark on the attendance register
- shopping trips
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time without leave- 5 days unauthorised absence will lead to a penalty notice being triggered by the Local Authority
- day trips
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

3. School Attendance and the Law

There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this Trust that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Head of School/Headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Head of School/Headteacher or their designated deputy may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on

the prescribed form provided by the Academy. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the Academy, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school.

At Attain Academy Partnership 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

We will not agree leave during term time:

- at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
- during assessment and test periods in the Academy's calendar affecting your child.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the Academy, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse, Local Authority Officers or Child and Family Support Worker.

4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education (See Appendix B) and we need a parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark we will inform the parent/carer. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Local Attendance Adviser, Home School Liaison Worker, Local Authority, Family Solutions or Social Care. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities to support us in raising attendance.

5. Absence Procedures

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30 am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or call into school personally and speak to the office staff.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.30am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%.
- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation with our School Welfare Officer, Child and Family Support Worker or Head of School/Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority to request a formal School Attendance Meeting if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

6. **The Missing Education and Child Employment Service**

Parents are expected to contact the Academy at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the Academy may refer the child to the Local Authority. Local Authority Officers work with schools, families and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Appendix A for the Essex Code of Conduct), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

7. **Penalty Notices**

The Local Authority are responsible for issuing Penalty Notices via the Missing Education & Child Employment Service.

Penalty Notices may be issued where there has been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the previous ten school weeks. Due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, penalty notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised leave of absence during the first two weeks of September.

A maximum of 2 Penalty Notices per parent for each child may be issued in an academic year for unauthorised absences.

The penalty is £60 for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay may result in prosecution by the Essex Missing Education and Child Employment Service, on behalf of the Local Authority.

8. **Leave of Absence Requests**

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for their absence (See Section 3 above). However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend. These include

- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances
- Approved sporting activity
- Approved activity (e.g. examination, school trips, visiting new schools)

If parents and carers wish for their child to be absent from school for such an occasion, they are requested to complete an 'Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time' form and return it to the school at least a week in

advance. The Head of School/Headteacher will complete the lower section to inform them as to whether the absence has been authorised

9. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

9.1 How we manage lateness:

Each Academy within the Trust will have a published time for the start and finish of the school day and for when registers are taken (See Appendix C). Children can begin to come into school once the school day starts. If your child is not in by the time the registers are taken they will receive a late mark.

Children arriving after the registers have been taken are required to come in to school via the school office if accompanied by a parent or carer, the parent/carer will sign them into the 'Late Arrivals Log' and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded. The Academy may send home 'late notes' in order to keep parents and carers informed. From time to time the Child and Family Support Worker, Head of School/Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.

Registers will close 30 minutes after opening. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after the registers have closed they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School Welfare Officer and/or Child and Family Support Worker, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

10. Long-term absence

Children with diagnosed conditions are entitled to a full education and have the same rights of admission to a school or setting as other children. However, the Trust recognises that certain diagnosed conditions might prevent a child from attending school on a full-time basis.

When children have a medical condition that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

11. Attendance targets

The Trust sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by staff, Trustees and Local Governors at the annual target-setting meetings. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The Trust considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

12. Deletion from Roll

For any child leaving the Academy, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from *school* form which can be obtained from the school office (See Appendix C). This provides the Academy with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know and safeguard the whereabouts of all of our pupils.

13. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to monitor overall attendance within the Trust and they will request an annual report from the CEO.

It is the responsibility of the Local Governors to monitor the overall attendance within the Academy and they will request an annual report from the Head of School/Headteacher. The local governing body also has the responsibility for the implementation of this policy within the Academy. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head of School/Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians and, if necessary the Education Welfare Officer.

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

14. Summary

The Academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

The Trustees, Academy staff and Local Governing Body are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

15. Linked Policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Equality Policy
- Lost Child & Missing Child Procedure Policy
- Policy for the Administration of medicines and management of children's illness

Appendix A

ESSEX CODE OF CONDUCT PENALTY NOTICES FOR PARENTS OF TRUANTS AND PARENTS OF PUPILS EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL (OCTOBER 2017) ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23

The purpose of this local code of conduct is to ensure that the powers are applied consistently and fairly across the local authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the scheme.

The Government requires Local Authorities to issue a code of conduct

The Essex code has been agreed following consultation with:

- Essex Local Authority – Missing Education & Child Employment Service
- Representatives from Governing Bodies and Headteachers of Essex Schools
- Essex Police Service

in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007, Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) section 23 subsection (1) and Sections 103 to 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006; Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Anyone issuing a penalty notice to a parent* of a child of statutory school age on roll at an Essex school, must do so within the terms of this code.

Legislation

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 inserts into the Education Act 1996 Section 444A and Section 444B enabling authorised personnel to issue penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444 and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a child of compulsory school age 'fails to attend regularly' at the school where he is a registered pupil, his parent is guilty of an offence. On the 6th April 2017, in the case of Isle of Wight Council v Platt the Supreme Court judgement ruled that the word 'regularly' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'.

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not present during school hours in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusions. Section 105 of the Act enables a penalty notice to be issued under Section 103.

Authorisation to issue penalty notices

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority (LA). It has been agreed that the Missing Education & Child Employment Service, on behalf of Essex LA, will usually issue penalty notices. The Service will administer the scheme from any funds obtained as a result of issuing penalty notices.

Headteachers (and deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers authorised by the head teacher) and police, and persons accredited by the police are all able to issue the notices under the Act, although there is no requirement for them to do so. In Essex it has been agreed that the Police will not issue penalty notices to parents of truants, but persons accredited by them may do so. Schools will not generally issue penalty notices but where a Headteacher (or their designated deputy) or accredited person decides that a penalty notice is to be served, they must email ME&CE.legal@essex.gov.uk to ascertain if there is any current legal action. A response will be sent within 24 hours. This will avoid a penalty notice being issued

when the Local Authority is instigating legal intervention proceedings for irregular school attendance.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

Penalty Notices apply to pupils of statutory school age which finishes in year 11.

Penalty notices for irregular school attendance /leave of absence **

- Penalty notices may be issued where there has been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the previous ten school weeks.
- In addition to the above criteria, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, penalty notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised leave of absence during the first two weeks of September.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for truancy/unauthorised absence

Discretion will be used to enable up to two penalty notices to be issued to each parent for each child within a twelve month period. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Missing Education and Child Employment Service legal intervention process will be used.

Pupil identified during a school attendance and exclusion sweep

School attendance and exclusion sweeps take place in Essex and children stopped are often with parents condoning the absence.

If the Headteacher does not authorise the absence of a pupil stopped by a Local Authority Investigation Officer and Police Officer on a sweep and there has been at least 10 unauthorised absences for that pupil during the preceding 10 school weeks, school will issue a warning letter to the parent within 14 days. If there are any further absences that are not authorised by the head teacher, during the next 6 school weeks the school will complete a request, signed by the Headteacher (or their designated deputy), for issue of a penalty notice and send to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service. The Missing Education and Child Employment Service may then issue a penalty notice.

Number of Penalty Notices which can be issued for pupils identified during a school attendance and exclusion sweep.

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve month period for pupils identified on a school attendance and exclusion sweep. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Missing Education and Child Employment Service legal intervention process will be used.

Excluded children

When a child is excluded from school, the parent will be responsible for ensuring that their child is not found in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion. (Section 103 Education and Inspections Act)

The excluding school must have issued notice to the parent informing them of their duty and warning that a penalty notice could be issued.

Where there is more than one person liable for the offence, a separate notice may be issued to each person.

Where a pupil is present in a public place in the first five days of a fixed period exclusion the Essex Local Authority would issue a penalty notice if the school is in their area. Where the child has been permanently excluded, it would be the authority where the child resides.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for exclusion

Essex will issue a maximum of 5 penalty notices per parent for each child during a 12 month period.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for unauthorised leave of absence

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve month period for unauthorised leave of absence. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Missing Education and Child Employment Service legal intervention process will be used.

Payment of Penalty Notice

The penalty for each parent is £60 for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice (service by post is deemed to have been effected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first class post).

All penalties are paid to the LA and revenue generated is retained to administer the system and contribute towards S444 prosecutions.

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period Essex Missing Education and Child Employment Service will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. The prosecution is not for non-payment of the notice but is a prosecution for irregular school attendance – Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1)

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notice

A penalty notice can be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Where it ought not to have been issued i.e. where it has been issued outside the terms of the local code of conduct or where the evidence does not support the issuing of a penalty notice
- The notice contains material errors
- Where it has been issued to the wrong person or the parent can prove it was delivered to the wrong address

Co-ordination between the LOCAL AUTHORITY and its local partners

The Missing Education and Child Employment Service and its local partners will review this Code of Conduct annually.

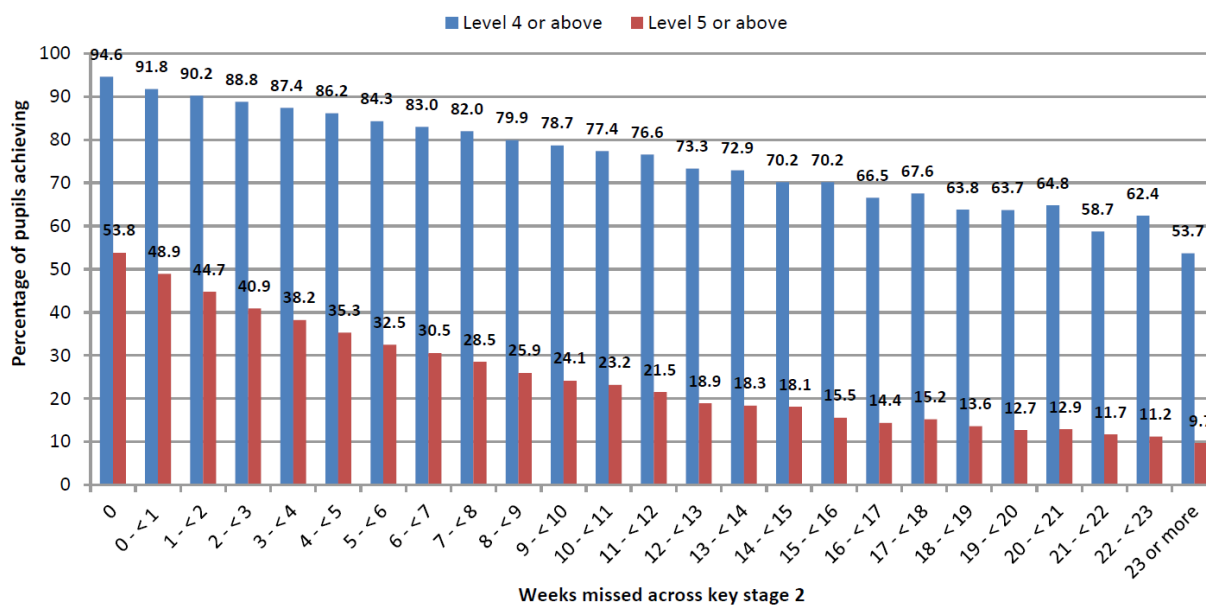
** All those defined as a parent under Section 576 Education Act 1996 are parents for the purpose of these provisions. This means that all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law. Parent means each and every parent coming within the definition (whether acting jointly or separately) and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to parent in the singular. As with prosecutions under Section 444 Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence.*

** truancy/unauthorised absence is absence from school without permission or good reason and the absence is unauthorised by the school.

Appendix B

DfE “The link between absence and attainment at KS2 - 2013/14 academic year”

The analysis of the link between overall absenceand attainment when taking prior attainment and pupil characteristics into account showed that, for each KS2 and KS4 measure, overall absence had a statistically significant negative link to attainment – i.e. every extra day missed was associated with a lower attainment outcome.



Appendix C: Rayne Primary and Nursery School

Name:	Rayne Primary and Nursery School
Address:	Capel Road, Rayne, Braintree CM77 6BZ
Website:	www.rayneprimary.co.uk

Section 7. Lateness

Section 7.1 How we manage lateness

Each Academy within the Trust will have a published time for the start and finish of the school day and for when registers are taken. The Academy gates will be open from 8.45 am when children will be allowed onto the playground and the school day will start at **8.50 am**.

Registers are called twice daily at 8.50 am for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and at 1.00 pm for Key Stage 1 and 1.15 pm for Key Stage 2. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in by the time the registers are taken.

Registers will close half an hour after the start of registration. If a child arrives after the registers have closed, they may be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session if the lateness cannot be satisfactorily explained.



NOTIFICATION OF PUPIL MOVING FROM SCHOOL

NAME	
CLASS	
CURRENT ADDRESS	
DATE OF LEAVING	
NEW ADDRESS (<i>where applicable</i>)	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEW SCHOOL	
EXPECTED START DATE	

Name of parent/carer:

Signature:

Date: