

Leigh Academy Blackheath



Attendance Policy

Approved by: The Senior Leadership Team

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1. Introductory statement

The Academy has a statutory responsibility to ensure that every child on-roll is safe by recording their daily attendance at morning and afternoon registration and monitoring their physical and emotional well-being during the day. It is a fundamental ethos of the Leigh Academies Trust to celebrate success and achievement and all Academies in the Trust actively promote and encourage zero unauthorised absences by all of our students.

All children have the right to access education every day of the academic year. This enables them to engage, progress and achieve in all aspects of Academy life. Positive life outcomes are fundamentally linked to excellent attendance and punctuality. We know the importance of all of our students benefiting from the 190 days of learning they are entitled to, to ensure they make progress and achieve the results they should.

If a school can improve its attendance by 1%, this can result in a 5-6% improvement in attainment. Parents and carers have a vital role, as well as a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and punctuality.

As an Academy, developing effective links with parents is a high priority and we are committed to regularly conveying to parents, carers and students the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality.

It is an offence in law to permit absence without good reason and may result in prosecution under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Academy will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Registration procedures and receive appropriate professional development with regard to these;
- Complete Roll Call accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, including registration during every lesson of the day;
- Stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the Academy on every day of absence, and provide effective mechanisms for them to make contact with the Academy;
- Promote the importance that full attendance and punctuality play in achieving the best possible educational outcomes;
- Promote race, disability and gender equality within all practices and procedures related to attendance and punctuality;
- Support students who have difficulty accessing education through the work of the Academy support, Trust Attendance and and Local authority;
- Actively promote and encourage zero unauthorised absences.

2.2 Parents and Carers will:

- Actively promote and encourage zero unauthorised absences;
- Contact the school whenever the student is absent on the first day and on each day after, of absence;
- Provide proof of medical appointments and medical treatment if required to do so by the Academy;
- Avoid removing their child during the Academy day;
- Attend attendance meetings with members of staff from the Academy when requested, working in partnership with the Academy to put in place strategies to improve attendance.

2.3 The Local Authority will:

If unauthorised absences continue then the school may refer to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies, Greenwich Council.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility of all parents and carers, as set out under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Where a student's attendance or punctuality fails to improve, despite the school implementing a range of supportive interventions, the matter may be referred to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (Greenwich Council).

If unauthorised absence continues, the following escalating interventions may apply:

Stage 1 – First Penalty Notice:

A Penalty Notice (PN) may be issued if a student has 10 or more sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period.

The fine is £80 per parent/carers, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

If the PN is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is required to pursue prosecution.

Stage 2 – Second Penalty Notice:

If a second offence occurs within three years of the first, a second PN may be issued.

This carries a flat-rate fine of £160 per parent/carers, per child.

If unpaid after 28 days, prosecution will follow.

Stage 3 – Prosecution:

If a third offence occurs within three years, or if any Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will initiate legal proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

This may result in a fine of up to £1,000 for a first offence, or up to £2,500 and/or three months' imprisonment for repeated or aggravated offences.

Unauthorised absence may also be addressed under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, depending on the circumstances. The school remains committed to working in partnership with families to secure regular attendance and to offer support at every stage.

3. Attendance Procedures

3.1 The Academy Day and Roll Call

The statutory recording of attendance and absence at the start of each session (am / pm) is known as Roll Call.

This is undertaken within the first 60 minutes of the morning (8:30am to 9.30am) and afternoon sessions.

Wherever possible this Roll Call is taken 'electronically' by register calling.

- The recording of attendance and absence to all other lessons will be known as Registration.
- Designated staff will be reminded of their legal duty to complete and submit Roll Call at the appropriate time and using the correct registration codes (Appendix 1).
- Registers for Roll Call will officially close 60 minutes after the start of the am and pm session. Students who arrive anytime between 8.30am and 9.30am will be marked as late. Students who arrive late after 9.30am will be marked as an unauthorised absence, 'U', for the morning session.
- The afternoon session for registration is undertaken between 12.25pm and 13.25pm (or between 13:05 and 14:05 if the student registered is on second lunch).

3.2 Informing the Academy of Absence If a child is absent

Parents or Carers must:

- Contact the Student Absence phone line prior to 8.00am on the first day and subsequent days of absence, advising of the reason and likely length of absence.
- Contact the student's College Email Address (Sancho@leighacademyblackheath.org.uk or Fawcett@leighacademyblackheath.org.uk or Airy@leighacademyblackheath.org.uk) to provide any necessary evidence to authorise the absence. This needs to be completed as soon as the evidence is available. The Academy will not chase up medical evidence; this is a parental responsibility to provide it. Wherever possible, all medical appointments should be taken outside of school time. Medical evidence can be an attached photo, screenshot or photocopy of: ○ letter from medical professional, ○ appointment card with student name date and time, ○ copy of prescription note, ○ copy of prescribed medication sticker on side of medicine packaging.
- Request a discussion or meeting with the College team to discuss extended absence due to illness or if there are any other concerns affecting school attendance. If the Academy is not informed of an absence, it will take the following action:

3.3 Unauthorised Absence Absence

This will be deemed unauthorised where:

- Parents or carers do not provide medical evidence to support absence due to ill health when requested by the Academy;
- Parents or carers remove students from school for holidays or trips during term time (please note: holidays in Term time will not be authorised. The Academy is closed for 14 weeks a year when parents can take holidays and travel abroad);
- Students arrive at the Academy after the registration period has closed;
- Parents or carers keep children from the Academy unnecessarily;
- Parents or carers do not communicate the reason for absence to the Academy;
- A student truants and are absent without the parents' or carers' knowledge;

Where there is an exceptional circumstance resulting in a student being absent during term time, a request can be made to the Principal via completion of the appropriate Google form who will then consider the application and respond. The Principal's decision is final.

A student who has 10 unauthorised sessions across a 6 week period may be liable for a fixed penalty notice by the attendance advisory service.

3.4 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Students arriving late cannot start the day effectively, may disrupt lessons, and encourage absence or poor punctuality in others. Our Academy is located in a very accessible part of Greenwich with the majority of students living within walking or cycling distance, therefore traffic issues will not be a valid excuse unless a major incident has taken place. Where students are late to the Academy, with no valid reason the following punctuality protocols will be followed:

- The Academy day starts officially at 8.30am and we expect students to be through the gate and on their way to their morning registration lineup by 8.20am.
- Any student who arrives through the gate after 8.30am will be expected to enter via Reception and report to the Student Services Manager at the Cloakroom. They will take their name and will be issued a late mark ('L') anytime between the registration period of 8.30am and 9.30am.
- Lateness after 9.30am results in an absence mark for the morning session which, without valid reason, would be deemed unauthorised (U).
- A student's second late offence of the week between Monday-Wednesday or Wednesday-Friday will automatically be issued a D2, 30-minute detention.
- Persistent lateness can lead to a meeting with the College team.
- Poor punctuality resulting in unauthorised absences (U) e.g after 9.30am, is classed as irregular Academy attendance and is dealt with accordingly. This may mean that parents or carers could face the possibility of legal action.

- If you know your child is going to be late for a specific reason please call the Academy before 8:30am, following the same procedures for absence.
- If a student is returning to the Academy following an absence during the day they will need to arrive for registration between 12.25pm and 13.25pm (or between 13:05 and 14:05 if the student registered is on second lunch), or they would be marked as absent for the afternoon session.

3.5 Informing parents of absence, lateness and illness

- Medical Reasons - The student should seek medical attention from our on-site first aider. With permission, a student may take time out of a lesson on a college plaza or medical room to see if their condition improves. The first aider may feel that it is not appropriate for the child to be in the Academy due to poor health. Permission from the Head of College must be granted before a child leaves the site due to feeling unwell. First aid staff will contact parents or carers to gain permission to send the student home, in some cases the parent will be required to collect their child from the Academy
- Students must not contact parents during the Academy day and request collection or permission to leave

3.6 Leaving Site During the Day

- Prior to leaving the Academy site, all students must report to their College Student Services Manager and be officially signed out via reception. If Parents or Carers are unable to collect their child and they are of secondary school age, and have given verbal permission for the student to leave the Academy, Parents or Carers should contact the relevant College Student Services Manager as soon as the student arrives home.
- LAB16 students who wish to leave the site during the Academy day must adhere to the signing out procedures determined by the Head of LAB16.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of attendance is systematic and rigorous to ensure there is a strategic approach to improving a student's attendance where it is below expected and impacting on their progress:

- Academy attendance data will be published for consideration at every Academy board meeting. It may also be submitted to the Trust Academies Standards Committee as required.
- Attendance Data will be produced regularly and distributed to the Senior Leadership Team to enable interventions to occur.
- The relevant Senior Leader and Student Services Manager within each college will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their college.
- The Head of each College has responsibility for the attendance figures, and actions to improve attendance within their college.

- A Designated Senior Leader has overall responsibility for the publication and monitoring of the attendance data for the whole Academy.
- Attendance data will be collected via the DfE Census three times per academic year.

5. Strategies for Improving Attendance and Punctuality

- The school's attendance lead is Mr Morison (Deputy Principal) who will work alongside our Student Service Managers to monitor attendance across the school.
- The person responsible for leading attendance in each college will meet regularly with relevant staff and make them aware of significant attendance trends and patterns and seek their support to address any issues with students, parents or carers and other stakeholders. This may include Student Services or pastoral staff, tutors, Directors of Learning, College Leadership teams, and other staff as appropriate.
- Attendance, punctuality and its impact on learning and progress will be a key area for discussion between Tutors, Student Support, College Leadership teams and parents or carers during consultation evenings.
- A range of positive strategies will be used to reward individual students and groups for outstanding or improved attendance.
- Attendance will be a regular agenda item during Senior Leadership Meetings
- Student attendance data may be shared with Parents or Carers, Local Authority, Early Help or FaaS, Children's Social Services, Police, relevant LEA's, Ofsted and the DfE.
- We understand the importance of working with all stakeholders to improve attendance within the academy and we follow the guidance from the DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance.'

6. Absence of Leave during Term Time

The Academy may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in the following circumstances:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad (in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
- Attending an interview for entry into another educational institution or for future employment;
- Study leave: for public examinations;
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable (please note: these will be reviewed after each fortnightly cycle, and utilised for a maximum of two such cycles);
- Exceptional circumstances.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'. Examples include the death or terminal illness of a close relative; or to attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative. Even in these exceptional circumstances, the academy will typically only authorise 1 day's absence, such is the importance of attendance to student outcomes.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made via submission of the appropriate Google form to the Principal of the Academy.

The Principal of the Academy will make the final decision of acceptance or refusal. If your request is not approved and you decide to take your child out of school, it will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a penalty notice. From September 2013, the DfE amended the Education (penalty notices) (England) Regulations 2007, so that each parent/carers who receives a Penalty Notice for taking their child out of school during term time has to pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. Please be aware, non-payment of penalty notices may result in further legal prosecution.

7. Persistent Absence Referrals

A student is deemed to be a PA (Persistent Absentee) if their attendance falls below 90%. The Academy will expect 100%, with students below 95% being considered at risk by the local authority. Students who fall into either of these categories, will be monitored by the College attendance teams. Analysis of attendance by year groups will identify strengths and areas for intervention to further improve attendance. A referral may be made to the local authority attendance service should attendance remain poor after Academy and Trust interventions.

8. Penalty Notices

The Academy follows set procedures set out by Greenwich Council for issuing penalty notices. Greenwich Attendance Service takes responsibility for issuing Penalty notices and taking other legal actions following referral by the Academy. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

8.1 Unauthorised absence Penalty Notices:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence.
- Parents or Carers and students are supported by the Academy and local authority to overcome barriers to regular attendance. Sanctions of any nature are used where parental cooperation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem.
- A penalty notice can only be issued as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that its use will secure improvement.
- A penalty notice can only be issued where a student has been absent or late for a period or periods of time and the absence or lateness has not been authorised by the Academy.
- After the Academy has taken steps to resolve attendance concerns, and warned the parent or carer of possible Penalty Notice referral, the Academy will refer directly to the local authority, to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence where the student has been absent for 10 or more half day sessions without authorisation during a 6 week period – these do not need to be consecutive.
- Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

- If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, then the charge will be at a flat rate of £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days.
- In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. A statutory attendance referral may also be made to the local authority and may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

8.2 Exclusion

- Please note: a penalty notice can be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours of days 1-5 of any fixed term or permanent exclusion. Where penalty notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

9. Removing a Student from the Academy Roll

9.1 School Transfer

If parents or carers transfer their child to another school or Academy, they should advise the Attendance Advisory Officer and the relevant head of College, as a matter of priority, providing all necessary details, including any new address (if relevant) and the school or Academy the child is transferring to. When in the process of a school or Academy transfer the child must continue to attend Leigh Academy Blackheath until a start date has been agreed with the new school or Academy.

If the Academy does not receive this information and it is evident the child has left Greenwich, he or she becomes a 'Child Missing Education' (CME). Any child in this category is reported to the Child Missing Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under safeguarding legislation and ensure the pupil is on roll within another Local Authority or abroad.

9.2 Elective Home Education (EHE)

If parents or carers take the decision to educate a child at home (EHE), they must tell the Academy of this in writing – this letter or email should be addressed to the Principal and include the date of decision to home educate and a brief explanation of the reasons for EHE. Should a letter be received, the academy will advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with parents or carers. They will only be removed from roll once the LA has confirmed receipt of the required letter.

If an EHE request letter or email is not received, the student remains on the Academy roll and action may be undertaken following irregular or non-academy attendance procedures. Again, this could lead to prosecution or an instant fine under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

9.3 Removing a Pupil from Roll Child Missing Education (CME)

Removing a Pupil from Roll As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8: When all possible actions have been taken, we will remove the student from academy roll due to continued serious absence. Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll.

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll.

Please note: We will only enter pupils on the admission register where we have received written confirmation that the person with control of the pupil's attendance has accepted the school place.

Where the local authority has offered a place at the school but no written confirmation of acceptance has been received from the person with control of the pupil's attendance, we will write to the local authority requesting evidence in writing and will not enter the pupil onto the admission register until this has been received. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the offer of a place will be withdrawn and offered to another pupil in accordance with our Admissions Policy.

We will enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name will be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before, or at the beginning of the first session on that day.

Where a pupil does not attend on the agreed date, we will send a letter to the person with control of the pupil's attendance asking them to confirm in writing within 10 school days that they wish to take up the place. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the pupil's name will be removed from the admission register and the place offered to another pupil in accordance with the admission policy.

9.4 Education for Health Needs including Mental Health:

Under section 19 of the Education Act 1996, where a child cannot attend school because of a physical or mental health need, and cannot access suitable full-time education, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable alternative provision.

Local authorities should provide education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 school days or more during the school year, whether consecutive or cumulative. While the section 19 duty sits with the local authority, Leigh Academy Blackheath will work closely with them and any relevant medical professionals to ensure that students with health needs are fully supported at school.

Local authorities should be aware that under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, a school can only remove the name of a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from its register in certain circumstances. These include where:

- the student has been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and

- neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

Leigh Academy Blackheath recognises that some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided. This may include:

- Facilitating any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance;
- Working in partnership with parents and carers to develop specific support approaches for improvements in attendance;
- Considering reasonable adjustments to practice to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school;
- Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements;
- Considering whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance;
- Communicating with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls or the school become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

Appendix 1:

DfE Registration Codes

- / Present (AM) \ Present (PM)
- B: Educated off site (NOT at an alternative provision)
- C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
- C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- D: Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)
- E: Excluded (no alternative provision made)
- G: Family holiday (Not agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- H: Family holiday (agreed)
- I: Illness (Not medical or dental etc. appointments)

- J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- L: Late (before registers closed)
- M: Medical/Dental appointments
- N: No reason yet provided for absence
- O: Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- P: Approved sporting activity
- Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- R: Religious observance
- S: Study leave
- T: Traveller absence
- U: Late (after registers closed)
- V: Educational visit or trip
- W: Work experience
- X: Non-compulsory school age absence
- Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Z: Student not yet on roll
- #: School closed to students