



**The Kings of Wessex Academy**

*Getting the best out of everyone*

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# Attendance Policy

*An Outstanding Church of England Academy*

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# The Kings of Wessex Academy

## Attendance Policy

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Excellent attendance has always been important and is crucial if students are going to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. The Law very firmly places the responsibility for attendance with the parents or carers of the child.

Attendance under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive sufficient full time education.

Attendance includes punctuality; the responsibility for ensuring a child is in school on time also lies with the parent or carer.

### 2.0 AIMS

- To create an academy ethos where students are happy to attend school in order to produce their best and maximise their potential.
- To promote students welfare and safeguarding
- To establish a safe physical environment that values students' emotional security.
- To establish positive working habits in relation to attendance and punctuality which will prepare students for the rigour of the world of work and life-long learning.
- To encourage students to be active participants in their school and wider community.
- To ensure that students attendance figures are of the highest possible standards with good attendance being celebrated.

### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that accurate attendance records are established and maintained
- To establish clear systems and procedures for dealing with student attendance.
- To make clear to students, parents and staff their respective responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To enhance the learning partnership between students, parents and the academy.
- To raise the profile of attendance as an issue relating to performance and achievement.
- To reward excellent attendance.
- To support those students and families who, for genuine reasons, may experience attendance problems.
- To interview where there is unexplained or persistence absenteeism to protect educational outcomes.

### 4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

#### *The academy will:*

- Contact the parent if absence is unexplained on the first day
- Write for clarification of unexplained absences or lateness
- To challenge unexplained or persistent absence
- Offer support for school refusers through the Year Leader and/or the Local Authorities Education Attendance Officer
- Offer support through the Somerset Medical Tuition Service where appropriate
- Check the registers for patterns of absence and will contact parents if concerned
- Identify vulnerable students and work in partnership with families and other agencies to ensure that they are sufficiently supported
- To ensure that vulnerable students (including Pupil Premium) children are monitored carefully to effect positive evaluation outcomes
- Be vigilant about possible Safe Guarding issues associated with poor attendance.
- Children Looked After will be monitored carefully in line with their Personal Education Plan

- In line with current legislation and in conjunction with the Local Authority the following strategies will be employed in order to improve attendance and thereby protect children's entitlement to an education :-
  - a. Fortnightly meetings will take place with the Year Leader, Education Attendance Officer and the Deputy Headteacher. Students falling below 95% will be discussed. Parents will be contacted where there are concerns or a pattern of non-attendance.
  - b. Non attendance meetings will be conducted with parents where there are significant concerns, where students attendance has fallen to 95% or have had 4 days absence whichever is greater
  - c. Parental Contract work with the academy to improve attendance over a specified period.
  - d. May issue fixed penalty fines where holidays have been taken during term time.
  - e. May issue penalty notices where attendance has not improved to expected levels or where absences remain unexplained.
  - f. Pursue prosecution of the parents/carers in cases of persistent absenteeism where absence is unexplained despite the interventions previously mentioned or where fixed penalty fines have not been paid.
  - g. An Education Supervision Order will be considered in line with Local Authority Guidance.

***Parents are expected to:***

- Promote a positive approach to attendance by ensuring that students attend on a regular basis, on time and only have time off in exceptional circumstances.
- Avoid family holidays or unauthorised absence during term time.
- Telephone the academy on the morning of absence before 9.30 am if their son/daughter is ill, and send a note in on their return. (This helps the academy to eliminate bogus calls and truancy.)
- Confine medical or dental appointments to out of school hours where possible.
- Return their child to school after their medical/dental appointment.
- Share relevant medical information with the academy to ensure that students can access education and be fully supported.
- Support a part-time timetable or re-integration plan if this has been agreed by the academy
- Support student safety measures by signing their child into the academy on their return; signing their child out of the academy if appropriate, with a pre-arranged appointment.
- Ensure their child's attendance at public examinations. Failure to attend without a medical certificate will result in an invoice for examination fees.
- Contact the child's Tutor with any concerns about their attendance.
- Support sanctions imposed on students who are late or found truanting from school.

***Students are expected to:***

- Be punctual to school every day arriving on site by 8.45am
- Be punctual to registration, lessons and detentions.
- Stay on site from 8.45am to 3.45 pm, unless given permission by a member of staff to be off site
- Sign in at the main school office if late for any reason.
- In the event of illness, go to the academy office for attention from the Medical Officer.
- If leaving the site for an appointment should meet their parents at the main office and sign out officially.

## **5.0 AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

The decision to authorise an absence and to record this in the register rests solely with the academy as outlined in DfE Guidance10/99.The reasons for absence must be cogent and usually fall into one of

the following categories:

- Illness
- Urgent medical or dental treatment
- Family Bereavement
- Exceptional circumstances
- Student pregnancy (tuition is provided for a short period of “maternity leave”)
- A student who has been granted leave to perform through licensing
- Interviews
- Fixed term or permanent exclusion
- Days set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child’s parent and the child belong
- Where the academy is outside the statutory walking distance for student of that age and the LA has not made provision for transport to and from the academy or has not offered a place at a school nearer to the student’s home
- Dual registration
- Travellers when travelling
- An approved sporting activity
- Alternative provision off-site, organised and/or approved by the academy
- Medical tuition

## 6.0 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absence is an unacceptable and unnecessary absence from school. The academy is responsible for authorising or unauthorising absences. The final decision for what is deemed unauthorised rests with the Headteacher. Examples of unauthorised absence :-

- Missing lessons
- School refusal
- Post-registration absence
- Lateness ( except where LA transport caused the lateness)
- Holidays in term time
- Parentally condoned absence
- Truancy
- Inappropriate medical absence or lack of medical evidence provided
- Insufficient explanation given where the student is a persistent absentee or the school has made reasonable attempts to clarify the reason for absence.
- Persistent and unexplained absence

## 7.0 HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

- ❑ **The Kings of Wessex Academy does not permit holidays during term time because all students are preparing for public examinations and to do so would be detrimental to their education.**
- ❑ **In line with DFE 2013 amendments the academy will not authorise absences for:**
  - Christmas shopping
  - Days out/trips/festivals
  - Looking after siblings
  - Waiting in for deliveries – or going to work with parent
  - Working in the family business
  - The Completion of coursework or homework;
  - Where there is evidence of poor attendance.
  - Holidays or unapproved absences during term time
  - Where a holiday request has been declined and the student is absent without medical evidence
- ❑ In very exceptional circumstances leave may be authorised by the academy by a request to the Headteacher or designated personnel.
- ❑ Where parents remove their child for an unauthorised holiday the matter will be referred to the

Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority and may lead to a warning penalty notice, fine or prosecution.

## **8.0 LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) ATTENDANCE SERVICE**

**The Local Authority has responsibility to deliver the LA's statutory duties to:**

- ensure that parents/carers enable their children to receive a full-time education appropriate to their age, ability and any special educational needs, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise;
- undertake legal proceedings in respect of the LA's statutory responsibilities;
- regulate child employment;
- advise on child protection.

The Year Leader will liaise on a regular basis with the Education Welfare Officer. Attendance data will be examined and individual students targeted for improvement, support through a fortnightly meeting.

## **9.0 MEDICAL ISSUES**

Parents are requested to keep the academy informed of any significant medical issues which are likely to affect attendance or progress at school with consent the academy is willing to liaise with the family G.P. or medical services. Prolonged absences should be covered by a medical certificate (GP's charge parents for this service). In cases of prolonged absence though for medical reasons the Year leader will devise an educational plan with information from the lead Medical Professional to reflect the individual student needs. This may also include a reintegration plan on return to school. Students with poor attendance will be required to certificate any absence from the academy by a Medical Practitioner.

## **10.0 REWARDS**

A certificate will be awarded termly and annually to those students who have had 100% attendance. Certificates are also issued to students who have significantly improved their attendance over a given period. Praise postcards are also sent home to recognise improved attendance.

## **11.0 RECORD KEEPING**

Registration takes place twice a day at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The register opens at 08.50am and closed at 08.53am. In the afternoon the register opens at 13.40pm and closes at 13.43pm.

Attendance is automatically recorded on SIMS.net. Attendance records are sent home to parents with their child's annual report. Any other correspondence related to attendance will be copied to the students' individual file.

Students new to the academy can be placed on role once information has been received from their previous school.

**Students can only be taken off role:-**

- Once confirmation has been received from the student's new school or college
- If they are a school leaver
- If they have been permanently excluded and their new provision has been confirmed by the LA
- If the parent has informed you in writing that they are electing to educate at home. In this instance the LA should be informed and take an active part in monitoring the educational provision.

## **MISSING CHILDREN**

If a student or family seemingly disappears, The Academy complies with the Government guidelines in that every attempt will be made to make contact with the family and ascertain a forwarding address/school. In such cases a 'Missing In Education' form is completed and forwarded to the LA. In such cases the school will liaise with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and take advice from them as to when it is appropriate to remove them from the role. Where a child is deemed missing the

students' record should be passed to the LA via the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

**12.0 DISSEMINATION**

The policy is published on the academy website. Parent responsibilities are outlined in the Parents A-Z published annually, explained on admission and periodically in the half termly publication of The King's Messenger.

**13.0 MONITORING & EVALUATION**

The effectiveness of this policy is monitored annually by the Governors of the Teaching and Learning Committee and reflects the current legislation on Attendance provided by the DFE.

November 2015