

# Register of Students' Attendance Policy

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## Version Control Document

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## 1. Policy Statement

Wayland Academy is committed to helping each student reach their potential and to providing an environment where all students feel valued, safe and welcome.

We will consistently promote a goal of 100% attendance for every student as our data clearly shows a strong link between attendance and achievement. Regular attendance is also important as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in education and friendships.

Students should be at school on time, every day the school is open, unless there is an unavoidable reason for non-attendance.

We are legally required to challenge persistent absence and may be required to take legal action where attendance doesn't improve.

## 2. Policy Aims

This policy aims to

- Outline the expectations and targets for student attendance.
- Set expectations in the context of legal requirements.
- Explain the procedure that Wayland Academy will take in the case of unexplained, unauthorised or persistent absence.
- Outline the responsibilities in relation to student attendance.

## 3. Definitions

**Compulsory school age** - A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until their 18th birthday (this came into law from September 2015).

**Attendance Support and Enforcement Officers (ASEO)** - Every school has access to an Attendance Support and Enforcement Officer at the Local Education Authority (LEA) for help and advice on issues concerning attendance.

## 4. Scope

This Policy applies to all students attending Wayland Academy and their parents/carers and to all Wayland Academy and TEN Group staff involved with registering or managing student attendance.

## 5. Legal requirements

5.1 **The Education Act 1996** (Part 1, section 7) states that parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive "efficient full time education" which is suitable for their "age, ability and aptitude" and "any special needs". This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

- 5.2 Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school.

- 5.3 Under the **Education Act 1996** (s434) and the **Student Registrations regulations 1995**, all schools must keep a register of attendance. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995, 2006, 2010, 2013).
- 5.4 **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, 2013** - set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school, or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.
- 5.5 Special advice is also provided by the Department for Education for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families in 'National Strategies: Attendance advice, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children' (11-2008).
- 5.6 **Taking a student off the admissions register** - The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (section 8) outline the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admission register, for example, when moving to another school or moving a child to be educated from home. On receiving written notification from parents of their decision to home educate their child, the child's name must be deleted from the register. The school is legally obliged to inform the Services to Home Educators as soon as this decision has been made.

## 6. Procedure

### 6.1 Expectations

We will consistently promote a goal of 100% attendance for every student as our data clearly shows a strong link between attendance and achievement. The expectation is that students should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless there is an unavoidable reason for non-attendance.

Wayland Academy's target is for an overall student attendance of at least the national average (94.8% January 2016).

Good attendance will be rewarded termly.

### 6.2 Registering attendance and absence

It is a legal requirement for all schools to keep a register of attendance (See 5.3). Registers will be taken at morning registration (8.50-9am) and afternoon registration (1.55-2.15pm). Registers will also be taken in the first ten minutes of each lesson.

Any student who is on roll but not present in the Academy must be recorded within one of these categories:

- a) **Unauthorised Absence** - This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.
- b) **Authorised Absence** - This is for those students who are away from Academy for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

- c) **Approved Educational Activity** - This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the Academy (for example work experience placements, educational visits, sporting activities. Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for absence at registration then the absence must be recorded, in the first instance, as unauthorised.

If students need to attend alternative curriculum provision or attend an educational visit for which transport is provided, a register will be taken on the relevant Academy transport and passed to reception for the Attendance team before departure.

If any student needs to leave whilst Academy is still in session, they must sign out at Reception. Students will only be allowed to sign out with their parents' or carers' permission which should be provided in writing or by telephone. No student will be permitted to sign out without this permission.

### **6.3 Lateness**

Students arriving after the start of the Academy day (see 6.2) but before the end of the registration period will be treated as present but will be coded as 'L' (late before registers close). If a student is late after 9.30am (without a good reason) a 'U' code will be used (Late after registers closed / unauthorised absence). This code reduces the student's attendance so can result in further action. In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Lateness will be monitored daily by the Attendance Team.

If students arrive late after registration has finished, they must sign in at reception.

All students arriving late will be recorded and sanctions for lateness will be administered according to the Academy's late system.

### **6.4 First Day absence**

Parents and carers are expected to contact the Academy on the first day of their child's absence and provide a reason for their non-attendance by 8.30am. Preferably, this will be notified to the Academy by using the Student Absence Line or email but we will also accept parent or carer notes handed in at either the Academy's Visitors' Reception or via the Form Tutor through the register.

If no contact has been made by the parents or carers, the Attendance Team will attempt to contact the child's parents or carers by telephone or text message.

Any information obtained from the child's parents or carers will be recorded in the comment box of the Academy Information Management System. In the comment box, the Attendance Team will record a brief reason for the absence.

### **6.5 Subsequent absences**

Each subsequent day of absence (unless otherwise formally advised of long term absence by the parent or carer) will be treated the same as the first day of absence i.e. the Attendance Team will attempt to contact the child's parents or carers by telephone or text message.

If there is no contact from the parent or carer within two days of absence, a standard letter will be posted home by the Attendance Team asking the parents or carers to provide a reason for absence.

If no reason has been provided after five days, a telephone call will be made to the student's home.

Any student who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team. **This is a legal requirement.** The Academy will include details of the action that they have taken.

Any emerging attendance concerns will be monitored and raised with the appropriate Academy teams. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the Academy will try to resolve the problem with the parents or carers. The Academy will seek advice from the Local Education Authority (LEA) Attendance Support and Enforcement Officer (ASEO) when needed.

### **6.6 Medical concerns**

If any student is absent from Academy due to illness, a letter or email must be provided by their parents or carers within 5 days of the student's return from absence, explaining the reason for absence.

Prolonged absence due to medical reasons will require medical evidence (e.g. a doctor's note, hospital appointment card, prescription etc).

If diagnosed medical reasons significantly affect a student's attendance, the Academy may initiate a 'Medical Attendance Support Panel'.

### **6.7 Medical Attendance Support Panel**

Students with diagnosed medical conditions whose attendance level is 92% or below may be invited, with their parents or carers to attend a Medical Attendance Support Panel meeting. The Academy Attendance team will meet to discuss any ways in which the student may be supported by the Academy in order to improve their attendance level.

The aim of the meeting is to ensure that the Academy is doing everything it can to support the student. A Health Care Plan should be drawn up by the Pastoral Team if necessary.

All Medical Attendance Support Panel meetings will take place with the child's parent or carer in attendance. If the parent or carer declines to attend, the Academy would pass the information to the ASEO where a decision can be made on further action.

### **6.8 Attendance panel / Fast track**

Any student with a level of below 92% attendance will be subject to an Attendance Panel referral. The panel will examine the reasons for the absence and develop strategies for improving the student's attendance. The student's attendance will be reviewed every six weeks until an Attendance level of 92% (or above) is achieved.

If any student who has been referred to the Attendance Panel continues to record a decline in attendance, they will be subject to the Fast Track process which will be initiated by the LEA. This process will fast track the parents or carers of persistent absentees to court to consider legal proceedings.

Students under 90% overall, or 10% unauthorised absences over a 6 week period or 5 days (10 sessions) consecutive without justification, may be referred to the ASEO for possible Fast Track or fixed penalty notice fine.

### **6.9 A welcome back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome. This is the responsibility of the Progress Tutor. The student will be provided with the relevant support to catch up on missed work, as appropriate.

### **6.10 Absence notes**

If a message or written note explaining the child's absence has been received by the Teacher/Progress tutor, it must be provided to the Attendance Team so that they can mark absence correctly. Notes from parents and carers will be kept on file and may be used for further investigation if required.

### **6.11 Requesting absence during term time**

If parents or carers are applying for a leave of absence during term time, they must ensure that a Student Leave of Absence form is submitted to the Principal at least two weeks before the date to which the leave of absence relates. They must not assume permission is granted if they have not received written confirmation. A separate application must be completed for each child.

The Principal will consider every application individually; but our policy is **not** to grant leave of absence for any reason other than in the **most exceptional circumstances**.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- If a parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is very likely to be the last such holiday;
- There has recently been a death or other significant trauma in the close family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation;
- The 'holiday' is for a totally unique, never to be repeated, occasion (e.g. a mother is remarrying abroad) which can only take place at the time requested (the destination is irrelevant).
- A wedding or funeral for a close family relative (of no longer than 3 days).

We will however, also **consider** leave of absence for the following exceptional circumstances:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- Parents and carers who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.
- When a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller family needs to travel out of the area for work purposes. In this case distance learning can be provided for the duration of the trip. As much notice as possible should be provided in order to work with parents/carers to plan ongoing education and to ensure that absence and attendance is recorded accurately.

Requests for leave of absence for the following reasons **will not** be authorised:

- If your child is in a public examination year group (Year 11);
- Because a holiday is cheaper during term time;
- Poor weather experienced in Academy holiday periods;

- Holidays which overlap with the beginning or end of term (even if dates are booked in error or by another member of family).

Parent and Carers will receive a fixed penalty notice (fine) for holiday that are taken when not authorised.

### 6.12 The registration system

The Academy uses a computerised system for keeping the Academy's attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Code	Description	Meaning
I	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory Academy-age students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Academy closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

## 7. Responsibilities

Students:

- Should be at school on time, every day the school is open, ready to learn, unless there is an unavoidable reason for non attendance.
- Attend all lessons punctually
- Not leave the site without permission.
- Provide a letter explaining any absence on the day of return to school following any leave.

#### Parents/Carers:

- Are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance.
- Should inform the Academy of the reason for any absence by phone call by 8.30am on the first and subsequent morning(s) of any absence.
- Should not arrange family holidays in term time.
- Should make dental and medical appointments out of school hours, where possible.
- Make any request for leave of absence on the Academy's official leave of absence form.
- Should let the school know if there is a problem so that it can be addressed as soon as possible. This could be struggling with a particular lesson, having trouble with peers or anything that is putting their child off coming to school.
- Should provide a letter explaining any absence on the day of a student's return to school.

#### Principal

- Will set a culture within the school that recognises the importance of student attendance and celebrates success.
- Will ensure that all staff know their roles in relation to student attendance and work together to support students towards the aim of 100% attendance.
- Will oversee student attendance, ensuring accurate registers are kept and that appropriate pastoral support is provided where it is required.
- Will keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance record.
- Review and authorisation of requests for leave of absence.
- Set attendance targets as part of the development plan and target-setting process.
- Monitor progress to student attendance.
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the attendance policy throughout the school.
- Arrange appropriate training for staff.
- Present reports with attendance statistics to the Local Governing Board.

#### Designated Academy Attendance lead

- Meet regularly with the Academy Attendance Officer to examine trends, identify students who are persistently absent and discuss interventions and actions to improve attendance.
- Attend Fast Track meetings with parents and student.
- Establish clear attendance processes and initiate with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance.

#### Attendance Officer

- Administration of registers and absence data ensuring that all absences are correctly coded.
- Oversee and record all evidence received for absences and parent/carer communications regarding absence.
- Parent communications through Group Call to follow up absence.
- Analysis and follow up of persistent absenteeism (working with Academy lead for Attendance).
- Administering sanctions and parent communications for students late to registration.
- Administering reward system for good / improved attendance.
- Managing administration for and attending attendance panels / meetings.
- Initiation of fast track and fine processes and associated administration.
- Liaison with ASEO and appropriate agencies.
- Reporting of attendance.
- Arrange welfare checks / home visits with the Police as appropriate.

Tutors / teachers

- Take registers within the first ten minutes of morning and afternoon registration / lesson registers.
- Reinforce timeliness and the importance of good attendance and follow up reasons for absence.
- Pass on any parent/carer notes or messages regarding absence to the Attendance Team.
- Contact reception if a child marked as present is missing from a lesson, to initiate the on call process.
- Raise any other concerns, such as persistent absence or absence patterns with the Attendance Officer.

## 8. References to related Academy policies

## 9. Contact

For any queries relating to this policy please contact your Academy Attendance Officers:

Helen Thomas and Michael Tynan

Wayland Academy Absence Line: **01953 881514 extension 252/256**

Wayland Academy Absence Email: [hwatkins@waylandacademy.org.uk](mailto:hwatkins@waylandacademy.org.uk)

## 10. Equal Opportunities Statement

This policy and procedure has been assessed against the nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

Student Attendance may be affected by some of the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010, in particular disability, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and religion and belief.

Some protected characteristics may result in more medical appointments and associated absence. Any requirements for medical appointments will be treated sensitively and in confidence as outlined in section 6.6. A medical attendance support panel (6.7) may be required if medical reasons significantly affect a student's attendance, in order to support students as effectively as possible.

Race and religion may also govern student requirements for religious observance and expectations to travel. Research has consistently identified Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils as the group most at risk in the education system. Where families have difficulty communicating in English, this also presents challenges for student attendance.

Guidance has been provided by DFE and support is available from Norfolk County Council for supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students with attendance and learning (see 6.11 and 5.5).

Where a student becomes pregnant, the Academy will do all it can do to support the student remaining in school as long as possible. Authorised leave of up to 18 weeks will be given. After 18 weeks, any absence would be considered unauthorised.

A translation service is available using the Group Call text messaging system, for families that do not speak English.

Any requests for absence during term time will be considered individually and respectfully and granted if the Principal feels they are exceptional circumstances (see 6.11).

If you have any comments or suggestions in relation to equal opportunities of this policy or procedure please contact your Academy Attendance Officer.

Appendix 1 – TEN Group Attendance leaflet and poster