Collaboration

Motivation

Evaluation

Resilience

Investigation

Creativity

Teamwork

Exceed Learning Partnership

• EVERY CHILD • EVERY CHANCE • EVERY DAY •

'Innovative Education - Transforming Lives'

Attendance Policy (Trust-wide)

Status	Statutory
Responsible Directors' Committee	Directors Board
LGB Committee	Local Governing Board
Responsible Persons	Mrs. B Nixon
Date Policy Agreed	September 2018
Review Date	November 2020
Next Review Date	November 2022

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Version Control

Version	***Revision Date***	***Revised by***	***Section Revised***
V1	September 2018	B Nixon	New Trust-wide policy
V1	September 2019	B Nixon	None
V1	October 2020	J Tuke	None

1. Introduction

Exceed Learning Partnership recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy ensures that our academies:

- Promote pupils' 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 range of opportunities when they leave us

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive, on time, every day that the academy is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will 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 parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2. Definitions

2.1 Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Every half-day absence from the academy counts as one session and this has to be classified by the academy (not the parent/carer) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised Leave of Absence is an absence from the academy for a valid reason such as:

- Genuine illness
- Medical/dental appointments which fall unavoidably in school time
- Other emergencies and exceptional circumstances as determined at the discretion of the Principal

Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of any medical/dental appointments and, wherever possible, arrange these appointments outside of the school day.

Unauthorised Leave of Absence is an absence which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' request has been agreed. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which are not explained properly
- Pupils who arrive at school after 10am
- Pupils who have been permitted to stay up late the previous night
- Shopping
- Looking after other children
- Birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed between the academy, the parents/carers and the child. If the parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

2.2 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they fall below 90% attendance for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform parents/carers immediately.

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/carers are requested to attend an Attendance Support Plan meeting (ASP) and the plan may include allocation of additional support through the School Nurse or Education Welfare Officer. We may use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance. Persistent Absenteeism can also lead to legal proceedings and the issuing of Educational Penalty Notices (fines).

2.3 The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

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 resolved in this way, the academy may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority.

He / She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Education Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance are available from the academy or Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carers or pupils may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help and information. They are independent of the academy and will give impartial advice. Their number is available from the academy office or by contacting the Local Education Authority. If a child's attendance gives cause for concern and sickness is continually reported, support will be sought through the School Nursing team.

2.4 Children Missing Education
All schools, including academies and free schools, must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. We are in agreement with the Local Authority to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. We must also notify the authority if a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in certain circumstances. Pupils who remain on school roll may not necessarily be missing education but we should monitor attendance and address it when it is poor. It is also important that pupils' irregular attendance is referred to the authority. Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils.

Academies must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the school exclusions guidance.

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Principal must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from roll until we have been notified by another school/academy that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from roll. They are reported to the Local Authority Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

2.5 Children in Care
With early intervention, the academy can often prevent a pupil's non-attendance becoming entrenched. We aim to resolve any concerns regarding attendance and punctuality rates as soon as a problem arises. We seek the co-operation of the pupil's parents/carers, children's home, key worker/social worker, residential unit, etc, in resolving the pupil's attendance problems before involving an Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Good practice is that we would notify the social worker and EWO if a looked-after child has reached 10 consecutive sessions' absence.

If a referral to the EWO is made, the EWO will initially try to contact the pupil's parents/carers, either by telephone or letter, to arrange a home visit. The EWO will normally visit the child's home/place of residence to assess the situation and the visit will usually take place within five working days of the initial contact. On most occasions, the home visit will result in an action plan being prepared by the EWO. This plan will include proposed actions, timescales and intended outcomes, and will include details of what is expected from the pupil, the parents/carers, the academy and any other agencies involved. It will contain an agreed plan of action and dates by which improvement in attendance is expected. The EWO will try to secure everybody's commitment to adhere to the action plan. In order to measure the effectiveness of the EWO intervention, the pupil's attendance and levels of authorised and unauthorised absence will be closely monitored by the EWO. If, after EWO intervention, the pupil's level of unauthorised absence reduces to a satisfactory level compared to the level prior to the intervention, and this level of attendance is maintained, the EWO will liaise with the academy and continue to monitor the pupil's attendance for as long as necessary.

3. Punctuality and Lateness

These procedures are also available in our attendance information booklet, which will be displayed for parents/carers on our academes' websites, Facebook and Twitter accounts at the beginning of each academic year.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and all pupils must arrive on time. 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. The late arrival of pupils also disrupts lessons, which can be embarrassing for the pupil 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. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and by celebrating good class punctuality.

How we manage lateness:

Registers close at 9am in class

↓

Pupils arriving after 9am will receive a late mark

↓

If a pupil has not arrived by 9.30am, academy staff will contact parents/carers

↓

Pupils arriving after 10am will receive an unauthorised late mark (showing them to be on site but with unauthorised absence for that half-day session)

Late marks will be monitored and the following action taken:

Three late marks in a half term: parents/carers will receive a letter with dates of the late marks recorded. Pupils may also be asked about the marks if appropriate

↓

Three to six late marks in a half term: parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with the Principal/another senior leader to explain the reasons for the lateness

↓

An action plan and monitoring period will be agreed at the meeting

↓

Improvement rewards/incentives will be implemented for the pupil and improvement letters/postcards/phone calls issued to parents/carers each week

If lateness continues to occur, additional agency support will be required to ensure that the child's educational needs are met. **The academy can be approached at any time if there are any problems with getting a child to school on time.**

4. Daily Absence Procedures

These procedures are also available in our attendance information booklet, which will be displayed for parents/carers on our academies' websites, Facebook and Twitter accounts at the beginning of each academic year.

How we manage absence:

Parents/carers must notify the academy office as soon as possible on the first day of absence, and no later than 9.30am, and the reason for absence will be recorded

↓

If no notification is received by 9.30am, the academy's Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers by phone and/or text to establish the reason for absence

↓

If no reason has been established by 10am, this absence will be reported to the Principal. If a child is already receiving multi-agency support, this will also be reported to the safeguarding lead and/or allocated social worker. Academy staff may undertake a home visit

↓

If a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern and sickness is continually reported, support may be sought from the School Nursing team

5. Unauthorised Absence Procedures

These procedures are also available in our attendance information booklet, which will be displayed for parents/carers on our academies' websites, Facebook and Twitter accounts at the beginning of each academic year.

How we manage unauthorised absence:

Attendance will be monitored every two weeks

Stage 1: If attendance falls to 97% or below, a letter will be sent (Letter 1) to parents/carers. These pupils will be monitored and the Attendance Leader will contact parents/carers directly for significant concerns

Stage 2: If further unauthorised absence occurs, a second letter will be sent (Letter 2) to parents/carers. The Attendance Leader will contact parents/carers directly for significant concerns

Stage 3: If further unauthorised absence occurs, the academy will make a referral to the EWO. This will involve an Attendance Support Plan (ASP) meeting taking place with parents/carers to issue an EPN warning letter and agree an action plan. This is the beginning of a six-week evidential period

Stage 4: If further unauthorised absence occurs within 15 school days of the evidential period, an EPN will be issued

Stage 5: Attendance will continue to be monitored and, if further unauthorised absence occurs, the process will be re-instigated from Stage 3

A second Education Penalty Notice could lead to automatic prosecution by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Evidence for prosecution will include:

- Any evidence of engagement with parents/carers, both written and verbal conversations
- Summary of actions taken by the academy and outcome from these
- Action Plan agreed with parents/carers - if failed to meet then the academy will provide evidence of any additional support gained for the parents/carers (removing barriers to attendance)
- Principal's certificate of attendance (evidential period of six weeks)
- Section 9 Witness Statement

The process for prosecution will include:

- Review of the evidence by an Enforcement Court Officer (ECO)
- Parent/carer invited to a PACE interview (Police and Criminal Evidence Act)
- A decision will be made as to whether to prosecute
- Court summons prepared
- Court hearing prepared and date set
- Court outcome

6. Holidays in Term-time

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that from September 2013, **no holidays will be authorised by the academy in term-time.** Holidays in term-time will be recorded as unauthorised and will incur a fine, unless the below exceptional circumstances apply:

Exceptional Circumstances

1. Where it is company/organisational policy for employees to take leave at a specific time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in any of the school holidays. This refers to full company close-down periods only and must be evidenced by the production of the policy document of the organisation.

2. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.

3. Other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Principal.

To request a holiday in term-time, parents/carers must meet with the academy Principal or another designated Senior Leader to obtain a holiday request form and explain the reasons for taking the holiday.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the academy, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract an Educational Penalty Notice. A separate penalty notice will be issued to each parent for each child who has unauthorised absence.

7. Communication and Reporting

7.1 Communication within the Academy

- All teachers should be aware of legislation, the academy's attendance policy and procedures.
- All attendance should be communicated on a weekly basis with teachers and the 'key-focus' pupils identified
- Teachers should report any pastoral concerns to the Attendance Lead to support the process of attendance

7.2 Communication with Pupils

- Attendance should feature regularly in academy assemblies
- The EWO should be invited to conduct an assembly with pupils at the start of each academic year
- Pupils should be allowed to undertake assemblies about the importance of attendance
- Teachers should devise systems with pupils on how attendance can be improved and how they can arrive at school on time
- Specific rewards should be implemented and reviewed e.g. reward postcards for pupils who have strong attendance and who arrive at school on time
- Attendance should be publicly celebrated each week with the highest-attending class on Facebook and Twitter (and improvements of individual pupils if permitted)

7.3 Communication with Parents

- Overall academy attendance should be reported in our newsletters
- Teachers should report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance within the annual school report
- Attendance Officer should contact parent/carers should their child's attendance drop towards the academy's target
- Academy staff should offer support and work with parents/carers to resolve issues affecting pupils' attendance
- Good and improving attendance should be celebrated by awarding certificates, trophies and other rewards incentives and events (to be determined within each individual academy)

7.4 Report Information for Governors

- Attendance levels each term for all groups, including the number of days as well as percentages and ensuring the report is cumulative as the year progresses, not just on a single-term basis)
- A comparison to the previous year's attendance
- Any low-attenders (lowest 10%) from the previous term with evidence that they are improving over time
- Overall persistent absence levels, compared to national figures
- Persistent absence pupils, with each stage outlined for governors and the actions implemented (pupil names must not be included in governor reports)
- A link between attendance levels to the impact on attainment e.g.

	Attendance	Autumn Attainment	Summary
Pupil A	79%	W2	On track – no impact
Pupil B	82%	B	Not on track - impact

The academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All academy staff members are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Policy Reviewed and Agreed: 19th September 2018 (reviewed November 2020)

Signed CEO: B.A. Nixon

Signed: Chair of Directors:

Policy to be reviewed in autumn 2022

Appendix 1 Attendance Code Index

/ Present AM

\ Present PM

B Educated off site (not dual registered)

C Other authorised circumstances

D Dual registration

E Excluded

G Family Holiday (not agreed)

H Family holiday (agreed)

I Illness

J Interview

L Late (before registers closed)

M Medical/Dental appointments

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence

P Approved sporting activity

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

U Unauthorised late (after registers closed)

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

X Non-compulsory school age absence

Y Academy closure (inclement weather/building accessibility/safety issues)

- All should attend/no mark recorded

Appendix 2 Pupil Attendance Classification

Outstanding

97% - 100%

You attend more than 184 days out of 190 school days each year

----------Target 97%----------

Requires Improvement

95.5% - 96.9%

You attend between 181.5 and 184 days out of 190 school days each year

Inadequate

92% - 95.49%

You attend between 174 and 181 days out of 190 school days each year

Cause for Serious Concern/approaching Persistent Absenteeism

Below 92%

You attend less than 174 days out of 190 school days each year

Appendix 3 Late Letter

Date

Name of Parent/Carer
Address of Parent/Carer

Dear

Pupil's Name

According to our records, (name) has been late arriving at school a total of (number) times since the beginning of (half term) in (month).

The (number) occurrences of lateness equate to (number) minutes of lost learning time. This not only causes some disruption to the class but affects (name)'s learning considerably as he/she is missing out on vital skills and sessions that run during registration time. Please be aware that for any future occasions of lateness, (name) may be asked to catch up on the minutes he/she has missed that morning, possibly at break.

We will continue to monitor (name)'s punctuality and hope to see an improvement over the coming month.

May I please remind you that school starts at (time individual to academy).
If you have any concerns relating to (name) that you would like to discuss, please contact the academy office staff who will arrange an appointment for you to come in and see me.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Appendix 4 Letter 1

Date

Name of Parent/Carer
Address of Parent/Carer

Dear

Pupil's Name

According to our records (name)'s attendance in school is (percentage)% which means he/she has been absent from school for (number) sessions (number days) which is a cause for concern.

I am sure that you will agree with me that good attendance at school leads to children achieving their full potential and enjoying their time at school.

We realise that this absence may be due to illness but we must make you aware of this figure to ensure that you make every effort to improve your child's attendance from this point.

We will continue to monitor this attendance and hope to see an improvement within the next two weeks.

If there are any particular problems that we may be able to help you with or if you feel that the school nurse could be of assistance please do not hesitate to contact either your child's class teacher or myself.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Appendix 5 Letter 2

Date

Name of Parent/Carer
Address of Parent/Carer

Dear

Pupil's Name

As you are aware we have been monitoring (name)'s attendance very closely. His/Her attendance record states that he/she only attended (number) sessions out of a possible (number), which gives an overall attendance figure of (percentage)%. This as you can appreciate is a cause for concern as Government guidelines state that average attendance in school is 97%.

Following Government guidelines I must inform you that I can no longer authorise any absences and attendance will be closely monitored from this point. I would appreciate it if you could ensure that (name)'s attendance improves so that no further intervention is needed. I do however need to make you aware that if his/her continues to decline, I will have to consider making a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer for further intervention. The Officer will endeavour to support you but they have a statutory responsibility to ensure regular attendance is maintained and so may need to follow the enforcement procedures that have been set by the Local Authority.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, or would like to discuss any private circumstances that are causing short term difficulties regarding attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Appendix 6 EPN Warning Letter

(each parent/carer to receive a separate warning letter)

Name of Parent/Carer
Address of Parent/Carer Date of letter

Dear

Pupil's Name:
Attendance level:

Re: Education Penalty Notice Warning Letter

As you are aware it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly. However, your child's attendance, as shown above, falls below the minimum expected level of **97%.**

If your child fails to attend school regularly you may be guilty of a criminal offence and could be prosecuted under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1) or 444 (1a). Education Penalty Notices have been introduced under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 as an additional sanction to address the problem of poor school attendance.

Your child's attendance will be closely monitored and I ask that you ensure there are no further absences from school without a justifiable reason. Please can you also make sure any medical appointments are made outside of school hours where possible.

If there is any unauthorised absence from school within the next 15 school days you may receive an Education Penalty Notice from the Local Authority. If you are issued with an Education Penalty Notice, you will be required to pay a fine of £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date of the notice. If issued, there is no right of appeal. Payment of the Education Penalty Notice will discharge your liability for the six week evidential period covered by the notice. However, if payment is not received, the Local Authority may decide to prosecute you for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child at school.

If you have any questions about this letter or require additional support, please contact (name of contact at school)

Yours sincerely

Principal

Appendix 7 ASP Meeting Template

Attendance Support Plan Meeting

Pupil:	**DOB:**
Academy:	**Date:**
Present:	

Summary of discussion and agreements/targets:

Agreed Attendance targets			
	Week commencing	**Target %**	**Actual %**
Week 1			
Week 2			
Progress reviewed with pupil at week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			
Week 5			
Week 6			

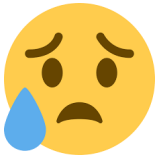
Agreed by:	**Review date:**
Parent:	**Pupil:**
Academy:	

Appendix 8 Voice of the Child Pupil Review Meeting Template

Name of Child:	Current Attendance:

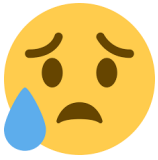
Introduction – include who you are and why you are there.
If age appropriate ask if they understand why you are speaking to them.

Attendance – Have attendance certificate if age appropriate



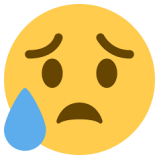
1 2 3 4 5

School Life – Covering relationships with staff and peers, best lessons/least enjoyed, coursework, options, who they can speak to in school, aspirations, emotional/behavioural, peer relationships, bullying, disapplication, SEN etc.



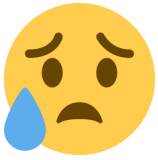
1 2 3 4 5

Home/Family Life – Covering relationships, identity, family dynamics, where they live, wider community, any wider family input in lives, hobbies etc.



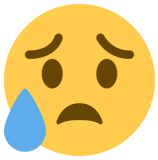
1 2 3 4 5

Health – Covering general health, substance use, emotional wellbeing.



1 2 3 4 5

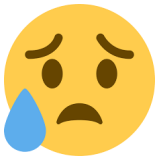
Child/Young Person wishes and feelings.



1 2 3 4 5

What happens next / Action Plan Covering targets for child or young person, sticker charts, positive reward cards etc.

(when age appropriate discuss implications i.e. attendance being monitored, possible court action)



1 2 3 4 5

Date of Meeting: _____

Staff Member Signature: _____

Child/Young Person Signature : _____

(where age-appropriate) ☐