

# Attendance Policy

## Reach Academy Feltham



Reach Academy Feltham works in partnership with parents, children, and the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in Hounslow Local Authority to monitor and ensure good attendance for all children in Reach Academy.

Please see below for the statutory process that needs to be followed when a student is absent from school:

### I. Authorizing student absence because of illness:

- If a student is ill and/or unable to attend school for an unplanned reason, the parent/carer needs to contact the school office to inform them before 8 am on the first day of absence, and each subsequent day unless the period of absence is definable at the beginning, in which case the parent/carer must inform the Academy of the date of their child's return.
- Parents/carers must contact the school office rather than the child's form tutor, Head of Year or any other member of staff.
- Reach Academy will only 'authorise' the student's absence if there is sufficient evidence that the student is not able to be, or should not be in school.
- This means that when the student returns to school, they need to bring in any one of the following, and give this to their form tutor:
  - a doctor's note;
  - a copy of a prescription/appointment card;
  - a receipt for over the counter medicine.
- If the student does not bring sufficient evidence, their absence will be marked as 'unauthorized'. Persistent unauthorized absences will have further consequences, see Section IV below.

### II. Authorizing student absence for term-time leave:

- Parents/carers need to contact the school office in writing to request term-time leave at least 3 weeks in advance.
- Term-time leave will only be authorized in exceptional circumstances, as our aim is to ensure students do not miss important learning time. Holidays are never exceptional circumstances.
- Parents/carers will be informed if their request for term-time leave has been authorised within 1 week of submitting their request
- If parents/carers decide to take the child on holiday/off school even when this has not been authorized, this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence'.
- Details on unauthorized absences is passed onto Reach Academy's designated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) at the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in Hounslow.
- The EWO will send parents a Fixed Penalty Warning Letter (FPWL) if this is the first time in the child's whole school career that they have been referred for taking unauthorized term-time leave. If there is a second (or more) time in the child's whole school career that they take unauthorized term-time leave, then the EWO will send parents a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). See details of the FPN below:
  - The FPN is £60 (per parent/carer) if paid within 21 days.
  - If paid after 21 days but within 28 days, the penalty is doubled to £120 per parent, per child.
  - If payment is not received within 42 days from date of issue, then parents/carers may be prosecuted for the offence and could be subject to a fine of up to £1,000.
  - In addition, if the term-time leave is more than 20 school days, the child will be taken off roll from Reach Academy Feltham.

The EWS statutory process, outlined above, highlights how seriously the local authority takes non-authorized term-time leave. We advise parents to take this into account and avoid planning term-time holidays.

### III. Absence for 3 consecutive days:

- If a student has missed school for a consecutive period of three days, and we have had no contact with the parent/carer during this time, we will refer the student to the EWS.
- As a result of this referral, the EWO will make a statutory home-visit to speak to the parent/carer and child to establish the reason for absence.
- For students who have persistent low attendance, further action will be taken (please see Section IV below).

### IV. For students with persistent unauthorized and low-attendance:

- Students are expected to have 95% attendance or above. Where a student's attendance is irregular and drops below 95% without medical confirmation, their Head of Year will set up a time to meet the parent/carer along with the student.
- The purpose of this meeting is to discuss any difficulties and put in place a plan to improve attendance. During the meeting we will make a home-school agreement and set targets for improved attendance. The target will usually be 95% attendance for a 4 week period, but this may differ if there are extenuating circumstances.
- If parents/carers are not responsive and do not come for the meeting, the contract will be filled out by the school and posted to their home address.
- If attendance improves as per these targets over a 4 week period, no further action will be taken at this stage. However, if attendance **does not** improve as per these targets, parents will be called for a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss steps to improve attendance. During the meeting we will update the home-school agreement and set targets for improved attendance. The target will usually be 95% attendance over a 2 week period.
- If attendance **does not** improve as per these targets, **and** the student's attendance is below 85% with unauthorised absences, we have a duty to refer the student to EWS. If there is persistent absenteeism between 86-95%, the school will continue to work with the family to raise attendance levels.

In cases where attendance drops below 85% with unauthorized absences, Reach Academy will make a referral to EWS. Following our referral:

- The family will work with the EWO to help raise the child's attendance levels.
- Every effort will be made over a 2-3 month period to help the family improve the child's attendance.
- This could include: signposting the child/family to appropriate support services; facilitating partnerships with other professionals; referring the family for an Early Help Assessment.

If attendance still fails to improve after these interventions, as a last resort the local authority may have to consider taking legal action against the parents through the courts or issuing a fixed penalty fine. As mentioned above:

- The penalty is £60 (per parent/carer) if paid within 21 days.
- If paid after 21 days but within 28 days the penalty is doubled to £120 per parent, per child.
- If payment is not received within 42 days from date of issue, parents/carers may be prosecuted for the offence and could be subject to a fine of up to £1,000.

Of course, the objective of EWS and Reach Academy is to work proactively with families to ensure good attendance, and we expect that such measures would be extremely rare.



## For Staff & Governors – Introduction

Attendance is critical to achieving our ambitious vision. We aim to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach for excellence. For pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly – this policy sets out how we will ensure that pupils will be at the Academy, on time, every day the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

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### 1. Importance of regular attendance

All children of school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability or any special need s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Reach Academy Feltham takes the responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its students very seriously. It acknowledges that irregular attendance can disrupt continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement/low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

We believe that the whole school community should take responsibility for attendance. This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed.

### 2. Aims of the Policy

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#### Aims of this policy

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<b>Attendance</b>	To raise the importance of good attendance
<b>Monitoring</b>	To ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
<b>Punctuality</b>	To raise the importance of punctuality and ensure effective monitoring.
<b>Celebration</b>	Promote opportunities to celebrate and reward children for attendance and punctuality achievements

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### 3. Promoting regular attendance

It is important that all stakeholders see attendance as their responsibility. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility

**A range of actions will help to focus on promoting regular attendance.**

#### **Actions to promote regular attendance**

<b>Celebrate and display</b>	Celebrate 100% daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly by displaying names of deserving students around the Academy, on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and in regular newsletters.
<b>Report</b>	Weekly attendance report for all students (including payslip for students in Key Stage 2 to 4).
<b>Reward</b>	Reward good attendance through individual rewards such as certificates and payslip points, and group reward such as form group trips.
<b>Communicate</b>	Encourage open, honest and regular communication between the Academy, parents/carers, students and EWS around all issues concerning attendance and punctuality.

### 4. Absence procedures

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

- Students need to bring evidence which they pass this to their form tutor on the day that they return to school. This could be:
  - a copy doctor's note
  - a copy of a prescription/appointment card
  - a receipt for over the counter medicine
- Form tutors need to pass all evidence to their Head of Year. Heads of Years will discuss this evidence with their link SLT in their Year Team meetings and decide whether the absence should be authorized. SLT has the discretion to authorize absences.
- Absence notes need to be filed by the HoY
- HoYs will email the Secondary/Primary Administrator to inform them whether the absence needs to be changed to 'authorized' in Arbor.

### 5. Targets and triggers

All of the targets and triggers below apply to all key stages including foundation stage and apply to both attendance and punctuality. It is important to note that at early stages of the year when each absence has a disproportionate effect on attendance percentages, targets and triggers will be adapted as appropriate.

Target/ trigger		Potential action	Level of support
Target	100%	Reward and celebration	Universal support
Minimum target	96%	Reward and celebration	Universal support
Trigger 1	Below 95%	Parent meeting with HoY 4 week home-school attendance contract Support to implement targets in the contract.	Targeted support
Trigger 2	Below 90%	Parent meeting with SLT 2 week home-school attendance contract Support to implement targets in the contract.	Intensive support
Below 85%		Referral to EWS External Agency Support Fixed Penalty Warning Fixed Penalty Notice Prosecution Student taken off roll if there is unauthorized term-time leave for 20 days	Intensive support

**Universal support** = support that the Academy feels all families will benefit from

**Targeted support** = support that the Academy feels only some families will need and will usually only involve the Academy and up to one external agency

**Intensive support** = support that the Academy feels only a small number of families will need and it will almost always involve external agencies.

## 6. Referrals to EWS

There are three circumstances where Reach Academy makes referrals to EWS. These are as follows:

- A student has less than 85% attendance with persistent unauthorized absences, despite attempts of the school to engage the child/family
- A student is absent for 3 consecutive days and we have had not been able to establish any contact with the parent/carer
- A student takes unauthorized term-time leave (for e.g. going on holiday during term-time).

## 7. Process for tracking and following up on non-attendance

Throughout the Academy year we monitor absences and punctuality. Each Friday we assess attendance and punctuality for the week just gone and applying the trigger criteria, act accordingly.

The people responsible for matters relating to attendance in the Academy are:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Heads of Year
- Primary Administrator
- Secondary Administrator

The section below outlines the process for monitoring and addressing attendance issues

**If students have been absent for 3 consecutive days and we have had no contact with the parent/carer:**

- Primary/Secondary Administrators are responsible for informing Heads of Year and SLT if there is any occasion where a student has been absent for 3 consecutive days and there has been no contact with the parent/carer
- Primary/Secondary Administrators will complete an Early Help Hounslow form (Pages 1-3) and sending this to the EWO, copying in the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion in Primary/Secondary as applicable.

**If a student takes unauthorized term-time leave (for e.g. going on holiday during term-time):**

- Primary/Secondary Administrators will complete an Early Help Hounslow form (Pages 1-3) and sending this to the EWO, copying in the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion in Primary/Secondary as applicable.
- Primary/Secondary Administrators will complete an Early Help Hounslow form (Pages 1-3) and send this to the EWO, copying in the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion Primary/Secondary as applicable.

**If a student has less than 95% attendance:**

- Primary/Secondary Administrators need to send a weekly update of students with less than 95% attendance to the relevant Year Team.
- Heads of Year/Form Teachers need to contact parents/carers to let them know that their child's attendance has fallen below expected levels and call parents/carers in school for a meeting.
- Meeting with Parent/carer, student and HoY to discuss barriers to attendance, discuss possible solutions and complete a home-school attendance contract. Students are required to improve their attendance and average over 95% over a 4 week period.
- Primary/Secondary Administrators send weekly updates to each Year Team. If the child meets their target, Heads of Year communicate with parents and inform them of this. If not, this is escalated – see below.

**If a student does not improve attendance during their 4 week attendance contract, or if the student has less than 90% attendance:**

- Primary/Secondary Administrators need to send a weekly update to the relevant Year Team with details of students with (i) less than 90% attendance; and (ii) students whose attendance is not 95% or above despite an attendance contract
- Primary/Secondary Administrators need to contact parents/carers to let them know that their child's attendance is below expected levels and call parents/carers in school for a meeting with a member of SLT
- Meeting with Parent/carer, student, HoY/SLT to discuss barriers to attendance, discuss possible solutions and complete a home-school attendance contract. Students are required to improve their attendance and average over 95% over a 2 week period.
- Primary/Secondary Administrators send weekly updates to each Year Team. If the child meets their target, Heads of Year communicate with parents and inform them of this. If not, this process is repeated. If the student's attendance falls below 85%, the process outlined below is initiated.

**If a student has below 85% attendance:**

- Primary/Secondary Administrators need to send a weekly update to the relevant Year Team with details of students with less than 85%
- Primary/Secondary Administrators need to complete an Early Help Hounslow form (Pages 1-3) and sending this to the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion Primary/Secondary as applicable.
- Primary/Secondary Assistant Headteachers will complete the rest of the Early Help Hounslow form, and send this to the EWO.
- The EWO will set up an attendance panel to address the issue with the family, and follow up with Fixed Penalty Warnings/Letters/Prosecution as required.

The Academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to ensure that children attend. All Academy staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.



We will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. We shall do this through regular monitoring and evaluation of the policy and practices. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of race equality, equality for disabled persons, gender equality and community cohesion using an appropriate Equality Impact Assessment. The policy may be amended as a result of this assessment.

## 8. Practices to secure good attendance

### Checking Registers

- The Academy Administrators are responsible for checking that the registers are completed each morning and afternoon. It is also the responsibility of the Academy Administrators to ensure that where another code is appropriate to denote an absence, that this is altered and recorded in the electronic registration system.
- At 8.30 (Secondary) or 9.00 (Primary) and at 3.00 (Primary) or 4.30 (Secondary) if registers are incomplete or inaccurate the Academy Administrator is to send an email to the Principal, copying in Primary/Secondary SLT and the relevant form tutor.
- It is the form teacher's responsibility to ensure that the registers are completed each morning and afternoon – the Academy Administrator's role is to check not complete.
- The accuracy of the register is of paramount importance both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions that may be required. Reach Academy Feltham acknowledges that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers. Principals may be called to Court as witnesses and explain their registration processes and in particular the marking of a register in question. *The Student Registration Regulations, Keeping Student Registers (Guidance on applying the Regulations) and Guidance on the use of the Attendance and Absence Codes* will all be read and followed by Reach Academy Feltham (*Ensuring Children's Right to Education, DfE*).
- It is also the role of the Academy Administrator to ensure that paper registers are printed and kept to hand for circumstances such as the failure of ICT systems or a fire alarm or drill. In these instances it is the role of the Academy Administrator to hand the paper registers to the form tutors, collect them in after the agreed time period taken to complete them and enter the data onto the electronic system at an appropriate time, as close to the closing of the registers as possible.

### Authorising Absence

- **IN SECONDARY:** Where a child is absent the form tutor will collect in a note to authorise the absence and pass this to the Head of Year. Heads of Years will discuss this evidence with their link SLT in their Year Team meetings and decide whether the absence should be authorized. SLT has the discretion to authorize absences. After discussing with SLT, HoYs will email the Secondary Administrator to inform them whether the absence needs to be changed to 'authorized' on Arbor.
- **IN PRIMARY:** Where a child is absent the parent should hand in a note to the office to authorise the absence and this will be passed to the Head of Year. The Head of Year will consult their Line Manager and decide whether the absence should be authorised. HOYs will then email the Primary Administrator to inform them whether the absence needs to be changed to 'authorised' on Arbor.
- Parents/carers need to request term-time leave in writing at least 3 weeks in advance. Term-time leave will only be authorized under exceptional circumstances. The Principal has the discretion to authorize term-time absence.

### Unauthorised Absence

- Unauthorised absences will be followed up immediately. Each week the Academy Administrator will print out a summary of attendance for each form group and give it to the form tutor. As a part of Friday's homework, and the regular conversations about attendance, the form tutor is expected to act on the information from the Academy Administrator and request information from parents/carers to authorise the absence.
- Schools are legally required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

- The register must show whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Principal has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory Academy age to be absent, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the proprietor [see The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].
- Students will be referred to the EWS when there are cases of: unauthorised term-time absence; persistent unauthorised absence (below 85%); 3 consecutive days of absence with no contact from parents/carers.

## Attendance Updates

- Attendance updates are the responsibility of the Academy Administrator to produce. Each week updates on absence will be produced for all relevant staff to investigate.
- In addition 100% attendees each week, month, half term, term and year shall be displayed prominently in each form room and on the communal attendance notice-board. Attendance is also a major feature of payslip which shall be explained fully in the behaviour section below.

## Late Pupils

- It is the role of the Academy Administrator to ensure that late students are registered, monitored and placed in detention. Each morning students will be considered late if they are not in the Academy building by 8.00am (Secondary) and 8.30am (Primary). A member of staff will be on at the reception each morning (usually the Academy Administrator). This staff member will record the child's name and send them to their form room where they will participate in normal morning routines.
- At 8.20 (secondary) and 8.50 (primary) the member of staff will cease to be on 'late duty' and late children will instead sign in at the front reception and then go to the relevant reception before being taken to their class. All recording of late students should be handed to the Academy Administrator at 8.20 or 8.50 to be input into the system, or taken to the Academy Co-ordinator at midday and at 4pm.
- The reason for high staff presence to monitor and record late students is that it will enable members of staff to have meaningful one to one conversations with students about the importance of being on time and the factors that are preventing them from being on time at the moment.
- Just as with attendance, form tutors shall be given a weekly update on punctuality for their form and students with 100% punctuality will be displayed prominently around the Academy.

## Unplanned Absences

- If absence is unplanned, for example due to sickness, parents will call the Academy by 8.00am (Secondary) or 8.30am (Primary). At 8.30am (secondary) and 9.00am (primary) it is the role of the Academy Administrator to phone the parents of all absent students and ascertain the reason for their absence. The Academy Administrator will use the call to stress the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- If a child is due to be absent for an extended period of time then it is the responsibility of the Academy Administrator to inform the staff who teach that child and to collate work packs to be sent home.

## Unplanned School Closures

- If the Academy were to be closed during the day for whatever reason, for example due to dangerous weather conditions, then it is the role of the Academy Administrator to send a group text to all parents to inform them and to update the Academy website.
- In a situation such as closure due to extenuating circumstances it would be advisable for the all Academy Administrators to liaise and send one message rather than two (e.g. collaborate across phases). During their regular meetings the Academy Administrators will discuss issues with attendance and punctuality in order to ensure that provision for siblings is co-ordinated.

## Working with the Educational Welfare Officer

- The Academy Administrator is also responsible for liaising with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), in conjunction with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion in Primary/Secondary as relevant.

- The Academy Administrator may refer students to the EWO and will be the contact person for the EWO in the Academy, along with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion in Primary/Secondary.



### **Staff Absence**

- The Academy Administrator, in conjunction with the Finance and Resources Director is also responsible for ensuring that all staff absence is recorded and monitored in an appropriate manner.
- Staff should phone the Academy before 7.30am and should speak to the Administrator or the Principal. On return to work the Academy Co-ordinator must send a return to work form to the member of staff and ensure that it is completed and filed.