

## Phoenix Junior Academy



FPTA Academies



## Attendance & Lateness Policy

**This policy was adopted on:** September 2010 – Revised Dec 2017

**The policy was reviewed:** December 2017

**To be reviewed:** September 2018

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## **The Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Academies Trust Attendance Policy**

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

Aims:

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

FPTA Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

All schools will endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Each year the schools will set attendance/absence targets annually.

The schools will review their systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

### **Leave of absence in term time**

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The schools will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

Each school will develop its own methods of ensuring that attendance is maximized but will include rewards for excellent attendance which could include; letters home, certificates, public recognition and prizes. Consequences for poor attendance could include attendance panels conducted by Local Governors and senior staff, reporting to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner and in exceptional circumstances, working with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner to take parents/carers to court.



This policy was written using DFE guidance 'School Attendance' Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence (1994) and The Code of Practice for Schools and Academies. It is not an authoritative interpretation of the law but is designed to ensure a consistent approach to attendance issues.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school and arrives on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Irregular attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. Reasons for lateness and non-attendance may be complex and outside the control of the school but school must actively pursue the goal of regular attendance by all.

### **Aims**

- ❑ Maximise learning opportunities and promote an ethos of high achievement
- ❑ Ensure regular attendance and prompt arrival

### **Objectives**

- ❑ Comply with the law
- ❑ Ensure that every absence without reason and every lateness is investigated
- ❑ Discourage unauthorised absences and late arrival
- ❑ Ensure clear communication procedures with well defined staff roles
- ❑ Make effective use of the Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies (AASSA)

### **Promoting Good Attendance**

The school will:

- ❑ Distribute from the AASSA, LA/DfE, - information leaflets to parents
- ❑ Distribute essential policy information and other supportive information
- ❑ Keep parents informed of regulations through the school newsletter
- ❑ Operate pastoral team support groups for pupils with poor attendance
- ❑ Monitor and follow up all absences and lateness
- ❑ Contact parents if their child does not arrive at school
- ❑ Invite the APP to speak to children and carry out staff INSET
- ❑ Hold regular meetings with the Family Liaison Officer, Attendance Officer, Headteacher and AAP
- ❑ Hold half-termly attendance meetings

- ❑ Report attendance figures to the local governing board and parents (in newsletters etc)

## Registers

Marking attendance registers twice daily, is a legal requirement. They must be kept for three years after closure. Pupils must be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved offsite activity. The register also shows whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Individual attendance records may be used as court evidence.

Removing children from the attendance register and dual registration see: (*The Code of Practice for Schools and Academies*).

## Authorising Absence

The administrator in charge of attendance can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt, the head teacher, on behalf of the local governing board, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The head teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation.

Two days will be authorised then unauthorised after this if no medical evidence is provided. Code 'C' should only be used in **exceptional circumstances** and after written communication between the parent and head teacher. Examples include the following: a special, one off event such as sibling graduation, family bereavement, or a public performance. Medway Council operates a 'Truancy Watch' scheme. Proof of absence must be available for all children who are off site during school time (ie. dental/hospital appointment letter etc.)

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- ❑ Absence of siblings if one child is ill / or if parents are unwell
- ❑ Oversleeping
- ❑ Inadequate clothing/uniform
- ❑ Confusion over school dates
- ❑ Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- ❑ Birthdays

Any student who falls below 90% will be required to provide medical evidence and could be referred to the Attendance Advisory Service.

Sickness & Diarrhoea - If infectious 48 hours from the last incident. If not infectious i.e. from something eaten, 24 hours from the last incident.

## Unauthorised Absence - Holidays

It is part of the Trust's Policy not to authorise time out of school for family holidays.

Requests for leave of absence should be made in writing to the Head teacher at least two weeks, or more if possible, explaining why you want the time off. All requests will be followed up by a meeting with the Headteacher.

If the leave requested is for a holiday, and you know that the Head teacher will not approve it, it is strongly advisable that you make an appointment to speak to the Head teacher, as without your co-operation it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence which could result in a Fixed Penalty fine, especially if your child's attendance is below 96.4%. It is at the Head teacher's discretion as to whether or not she advises the Attendance Advisory Service not to issue a penalty notice. Currently the fine is £120 per adult with parental care if paid within 28 days of the notice, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. You could end up with an automatic referral to the Magistrates court if not paid.

## **Monitoring Attendance and Lateness**

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be an immediate referral to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) and a pre-start attendance meeting will be held. The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

### **'Five Steps'**

1. Parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and subsequent days. If not contact received, school to phone home.
2. Weekly checking of attendance with the Attendance Officer and Home/School Support Worker followed by regular checking by the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP)
3. Inviting parents/carers to a school Attendance Clinic with the Home/School Support Worker and the Attendance Advisory Practitioner.
4. Referring low attendance to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner
5. Formal letter from AAP leading to prosecution if there is no improvement

It will be the responsibility of the attendance administrator/s to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date and confirmed in writing
- Parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The class/head teacher knows of children causing concern
- Attendance monitoring figures are submitted as requested
- They meet regular with AAP to identify children for referral and complete referral forms (*The Code of Practice for Schools and Academies*)
- All regulations are adhered to
- Passes are issued to pupils off site during school time
- Parents are well informed about the law and the school policy

## **Unauthorised Absences**

The Academy in conjunction with Medway Council Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA) will monitor your child's attendance. In the event that your child incurs 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a six school week period a referral will be made to AASSA and a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer. You will receive a £60 fine, increasing to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine will result in a court prosecution for your child's non-school attendance.

## **Lateness**

Every child who arrives after 09.00 must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked with an L until 09:30 when the code will change to U unless there is an adequate explanation for the lateness. Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents by the Family Liaison Officer, called into an Attendance Clinic, or may be referred to the AASSA . Frequent lateness can provide grounds for prosecution.

## **Other Important Points**

- ❑ No names may be removed from the register without the permission of the head teacher. They must be removed from the admissions register first.
- ❑ Schools must make reasonable enquiry regarding the whereabouts of a pupil absent without notification for a period of more than four weeks (20 working days)
- ❑ CME referral to be made and passed to AAP.
- ❑ When advised by AAP, school to log on schl2schl website.