



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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<b>Monitoring &amp; Review</b>	Annually	

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## PURPOSE

The aims of the Attendance Policy are to raise the importance of good attendance in line with Ofsted requirements, to ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and that reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently, to improve punctuality, promote opportunities to celebrate and reward children for attendance and punctuality achievements.

### 1. Introduction

At Arena Academy, we recognise that regular school attendance is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable students to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all students is monitored weekly with the Academy seeking to work actively with parents and carers to ensure a regular pattern of attendance is maintained. We expect every student on roll to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to offer support when barriers to learning have been identified and aim to safeguard your child in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our students and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. We encourage students to attend and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of a positive attitude towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each student's:

- Attainment in school
- Relationships with other students and their ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new work and to work alongside others

The Governors and Headteacher, in partnership with parents and carers have a duty to promote full attendance at school under **legislation** and '**safeguarding**'

### 2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives and policy are to:

- To promote the importance of good attendance in line with Ofsted requirements.
- To emphasise the importance of and secure from students maximum attendance and promote punctuality to enable them to take full advantage of their education opportunities.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers, students) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "unauthorised";
- To stress the need for home and the Academy to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance and punctuality.
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism;
- Promote effective partnership with the Attendance Legal Intervention Team Birmingham and other services and agencies and follow their standard approaches in managing attendance issues.

### 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 4. Contact details of the Academy Strategic Attendance Lead:

Post	Staff Name	Email address
SLT Strategic Attendance Leader	Mr Malik	<a href="mailto:SMalik@corearena.academy">SMalik@corearena.academy</a>
Attendance Officer	Joy Oluwagbemi	<a href="mailto:joluwagbemi@corearena.academy">joluwagbemi@corearena.academy</a>
Head of Year 7	Mr Ali	<a href="mailto:SkAli@corearena.academy">SkAli@corearena.academy</a>
Head of Year 8	Miss Ives	<a href="mailto:HIves@corearena.academy">HIves@corearena.academy</a>
Head of Year 9	Mr Stephens	<a href="mailto:Astephens@corearena.academy">Astephens@corearena.academy</a>
Head of Year 10	Ms Taj	<a href="mailto:STaj@corearena.academy">STaj@corearena.academy</a>
Head of Year 11	Ms Van-Deventer	<a href="mailto:LVanDeventer@corearena.academy">LVanDeventer@corearena.academy</a>

### 5. Statutory Duty

Academies are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. This is a legal requirement and registers must be completed accurately and promptly. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the academy's admission roll. The schools utilises a central electronic administrative system – SIMS for this purpose.

### 5. Parental Responsibility and/or day to day care.

**Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.**

The Education Act 1996 section 7 defines the Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

*(7) The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:*

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
  - (b) to any special educational needs he may have,*
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

The Education Act 1996 section 576 defines the meaning of "parent".

- (1) In this Act, unless the context of otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person-*
- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*
  - (b) who has care of him,*
- except that in section 499(8) it only includes such a person if he is an individual.*

## **Definition of a parent**

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and academy will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular student when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

## **6. School day and Punctuality**

The school day at Arena Academy begins **at 8.35am**.

All Academy gates are locked at **8.35am** – students who arrive after this time must enter the academy through the main entrance. They must then sign in via the Inventory system. Students who are late to the academy but arrive before the central register closes will receive a reflection lasting 30 minutes after school. Students who arrive to the academy after the central register closes will receive a 60-minute reflection. Parents will receive a class charts message to advise them about the late arrival. Students who arrive late to the academy on more than 3 occasions will receive a 100-minute reflection.

Registers are open until **9.05am**

Afternoon Registers are taken **at 2.10pm**

School day ends **at 3.10pm**

All students arriving **before 9.05am** will be coded as authorised late (L code). At each registration session any student not present is marked as absent. If a student subsequently arrives after **9.30am** the student is marked as unauthorised late (U code) unless a valid reason is supplied.

The procedure for persistent unauthorised lateness is the same as for absence:

- a) The parents of the student are invited to attend an Early Help Meeting, barriers which may be preventing good punctuality are discussed and actions are agreed. In the first instance this will be a meeting with the Tutor, if there is no significant improvement this will be escalated to a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team such as the Year Group Co-ordinator or Head of Year.
- b) If there is no improvement in arriving to school prior to the close of the register, the Attendance Officer will then arrange a School Attendance Review Meeting (SARM) and a target for improvement will be set.
- c) If there is further unauthorised late coding, the Attendance Officer will then send a Formal Warning Notice (FWN) to the parents and a referral will be made to Birmingham City Council

## 7. Reporting absences/First day absence

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform the school by **9.30am** on the first day of their child's absence. If by **9.30am** on the first day of a child's absence the school has not been notified, the Attendance Officer will attempt to contact the child's parent/carer by text or telephone call.

If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If there is no valid reason for absence an O code will be used.

### **Parents are expected to contact school every day the student is absent.**

There are occasions when absence is unavoidable. These include:

- a) Illness.
- b) Medical or education appointments.
- c) A sudden bereavement of an immediate family member

If a parent knows in advance of absence due to an appointment, the academy office should be informed and the appointment card shown.

If a student is ill, the parent or carer should ring the academy to inform us and on return present a written note explaining the absence. Following an absence, if your child needs to take medication in school on their return, parents/carers will need to complete a form in reception and hand in the medication. Your child must not keep any medications in their bag.

## 8. Authorising Absences

There are two categories of absence:-

- (i) Authorised (approved)
- (ii) Unauthorised (not approved)

**Only the Headteacher or designated member of staff can authorise absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.** The decision to authorise or unauthorise absence will be made after referring to guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE).

### (i) Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a student has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if the student has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. If a student is persistently unwell, the Attendance Officer will ask you to make a doctor's appointment and obtain medical evidence in order to authorise the absence. Failure to do so will result in the absence being classed as unauthorised.

### (ii) Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a student is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a student is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## 9. Medical Evidence and Supporting Evidence

We ask that parents making medical appointments for their child, book them early or late in the day, so students can be in school for at least half the day.

The academy fully supports students' welfare and medical conditions and if your child has a chronic, persistent or recurrent health issue, we can arrange for a meeting with parents to discuss what additional support can be offered to help your child to access school, however we cannot simply accept parental information without the appropriate medical evidence. Students with medical conditions should attend school as per normal unless the absence is supported by medical opinion.

- An appointment card or verification by the Doctor/Dentist/Hospital is required.
- If it is necessary for a student to be out of school for any of these reasons, the student should be returned to school directly after the appointment or register prior to the appointment.
- Upon return to school the student can show evidence of any prescriptive medication prescribed during the absence. This may be photocopied and held on file.

There are of course, good reasons (especially illness), which make attendance at school sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, lessons missed cannot be repeated and "catching up" is never as good as the original learning experience.

The Academy recognises the need to support students during and after long term absence of any kind and will:

Endeavour to provide work for students to be completed off-site where appropriate and medical evidence has been received.

Consider all strategies in partnership with external agencies to encourage the return of students to school.

Ensure that there is a positive atmosphere within school in which students are welcomed back.

Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in re-entry programmes.

## **10. Roles and Responsibilities in managing attendance and punctuality**

We expect that all students will:

- attend the academy regularly.
- attend the academy punctually.
- attend the academy appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- ensure regular school attendance.
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at the academy punctually prepared for the school day.
- contact the academy on the first day of the child's absence and keep in regular contact with the academy.
- contact the academy promptly whenever a problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that our school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all students, twice daily, including recording students late.
- Monitor every student's attendance.
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a student fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes which provide a reason for the absence.
- Contact those families whose child's attendance has dropped between 90-93.9% on a half termly basis.
- Encourage good attendance.
- Contact those families regularly for students on our Persistent Absence cohort where attendance is below 90%.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for students, provide a safe learning environment; provide a sympathetic response to any student's concerns.
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of students who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the Academy's and the LA's expectations about regular school attendance.

- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of absence to the student's Tutor, Year Group Co-Ordinator, Head of Year, Attendance Officer and Attendance Lead.
- Invite parents/carers to meet in the Academy and discuss attendance and/or punctuality with parents/carers.
- Involve outside agencies where and when appropriate.
- Publish and display attendance statistics / absence data.

## **11. Monitoring attendance**

Students whose percentage of attendance falls half termly below 97% will be reviewed by school staff. Where attendance continues to cause concern, we will write a letter to parents and ask that evidence is provided to justify absences. We may arrange to meet with parents to discuss attendance. Attendance will be monitored every 2 weeks by Heads of Year and the Pastoral Manager.

- If there is no improvement the parents of the student are called in for an Early Help Meeting, barriers preventing good attendance are discussed and actions are agreed. This is undertaken by the Heads of Year/Attendance Officer. Ensure Early Assessment form is completed. 3 Houses is completed with the student and any additional external agency support offered at this time. A letter will also be sent by the Attendance Lead.

Failure to make an acceptable improvement or where there is an immediate concern further intervention's will be considered.

If difficulties relating to absenteeism cannot be resolved through intervention at an academy level, then we may refer the student through the 'FAST-track Process', inviting parents/carers to discuss their attendance issues. We will notify parents in writing if we feel this intervention is needed.

## **12. Academy interventions for Managing Persistent and Severe Absenteeism**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below 90% and a 'severe absentee' (SA) when their attendance falls below 50%. All students whose attendance have fallen below 90% or are at risk of reaching this level will be closely monitored through the Academy tracking procedure on a weekly basis, and regular contact made with their parents/carers. The persistent absence tracker is shared with Year Group Co-ordinators, Heads of Year, The Attendance Officer and SLT and will be monitored by either YGC, HOY, Attendance Team depending on level of absence.

Parents/carers will be given opportunities to work with school in improving their child's attendance.

The Ofsted Framework now requires students within the bottom 10% attendance to be monitored and for the academy to be aware of the reasons for their absence.

There are several sanctions that the academy can take to address the issue of non-attendance. In order to try and identify the reason for absence we will always talk to you first to identify the reason for absence.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from the academy for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the academy.
- A student has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Birmingham City Council Code of Conduct.



### **13. 'FAST-track' to Attendance.**

- 'FAST-track to Attendance' is an Early Help approach to improving student attendance which also seeks to act quickly where there is unauthorised absence. It is for all schools, academies and alternative providers. There are no specific timelines to follow, the process can be used at a time which is right for the individual student and schools have only one formal letter they will need to send to each parent/carer.
- The process aligns the thresholds for taking legal action for ongoing unauthorised absence with the Local Authority Education Penalty Notice 'Code of Conduct' and the Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) process.
- We know from Department for Education studies into the effects of absence on student progress and attainment levels that absence has a statistically significant negative link to attainment – i.e., every extra day missed was associated with a lower attainment outcome. It's clear from the data that being absent from school for any reason has an impact on a student's progress in school.
- Where schools are concerned about a child/young person's absence levels, whether absence is authorised or unauthorised, it is important that the school act to improve attendance levels.
- In terms of legal action, the Local Authority can only prosecute where there is unauthorised absence. In Birmingham this duty is delegated to the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT).
- The Birmingham Penalty Notice Code of Conduct states that there must be at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 12-month calendar period for legal action to be taken. Because schools were closed for a prolonged period at the end of the 2019/20 academic year, and due to the rate of Covid infection during the Autumn term of the 2020/21 academic year, only unauthorised absence from the 19th April 2021 can be used for the purpose of calling a School Attendance Review.

Where intervention through the 'FAST-track' process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

### **15. Local Authority Responsibility**

If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/guardian is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at schools, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend can be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, section 444 1A (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced new powers in relation to issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. Penalty notices must be issued in a manner which conforms to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all relevant Equal Opportunities Legislation. To this aim each Local Authority has a Code of Conduct in relation to issuing Penalty Notices.

### **16. Attendance Rewards**

Arena Academy actively promotes and rewards students who achieve good attendance and punctuality.

Any student who achieves 100% attendance & punctuality weekly will receive positive points on class charts.

Each week the school identifies and celebrates the forms with the highest attendance and publishes these successes in assemblies. Form Groups with the highest attendance at the end of each term receive a prize.

Each term students with 100% attendance are awarded with certificates and celebratory in Year group assemblies. Students with 100% attendance and with improved attendance will be rewarded with an experience or rewards trip.

Students with 100% attendance & punctuality at the end of the year will be invited on the school reward trip.

## **17. Requests for Leave in Term Time**

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Student Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Student Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Headteachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave in term time which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave in term time which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued in accordance Birmingham City Councils Code of Conduct Each application for a Leave in term time will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

## **18. Deletion from Register**

Students will only be deleted from the register in accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended in the 2016 Student registration regulations.

Arena Academy will follow Birmingham City Council’s Children Missing Education Protocol when a student’s whereabouts is unknown.

It is important that if families decide to send their child/children to a different school that they inform our school staff as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from our academy roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the student will be leaving our school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The student’s school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. Failing to notify Arena Academy will result in a referral to Birmingham City Council’s Children Missing Education Service.

## 19. Monitoring and Review

Achievement against Arena Academy attendance targets will be reported upon to the Local Governing Body and Board of Trustees. The Headteacher together with the Strategic Lead will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and procedures and where necessary make recommendations to the Local Governing Body and Board of Trustees for improvement.

The academy will keep accurate records on file for a minimum period of three years.

## 20. Relationship to other Policies

The Attendance policy should be read in conjunction with:

Guidance on admissions  
Equality Statement  
Child protection and safeguarding policy  
The Behaviour Policy

At Arena Academy we welcome the support from parents and families. We provide a safe and nurturing environment for your child to learn and make friends and parents are welcomed in school for a variety of events including special and celebration assemblies. In order for our students to feel safe and secure it is important that when visiting the academy, parents and family members remain calm when speaking to staff and refrain from confrontational or aggressive behaviour as this can be unsettling.

Appointments can be made with designated members of staff to discuss any concerns, any adults displaying behaviour which is deemed to be unacceptable will be asked to leave the school site.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
U	Late arrival	Student arrives after register has closed, unauthorised late
O	Absent	Student is absent from school without authorisation
N	Absent	Student is absent from school and no reason has been provided
I	Illness	Student is absent due to illness (not medical or dental appointments)

<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement