



Redgate Primary Academy Attendance Policy Appendix September 2021

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Associated documents:

Diverse Academies Attendance Policy

<https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2020/03/Attendance.pdf>

Diverse Academies Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

<https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2018/10/Safeguarding-and-Child-Protection.pdf>

Links to:

Parental Responsibilities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parentalresponsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School Attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schoolattendance>



Diverse
Academies

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Definitions
4. Procedures
5. Responsibilities
6. Registration
7. Lateness
8. Absences
9. Addressing Attendance Concerns

Redgate Primary Academy

Attendance Policy & Procedures

1. Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Redgate Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in the academy and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this academy and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our academy on our website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from DAT and the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and Governors work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from education frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet their targets. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, be losing the equivalent of 4 weeks of learning each year

2. Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in the academy are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the academy.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers, and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to all pupils in order to promote good habits from an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents, and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff, and governors about attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting, and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils and families who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

3. Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from the academy for a legitimate reason and the academy has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the academy to explain the absence.
- Only the academy can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the academy and will be marked in the register using the O code.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from the academy without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

4. Procedures

Our academy will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To clearly communicate the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents, and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the academy.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality
- To make a referral through EHAF to Early Help any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to DAT and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

5. Responsibilities

All members of academy staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Senior Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

The Principal is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of academy attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to Early Help service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with other professionals.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff

Staff in the Main Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information in SIMS
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early in the paper register and in SIMS.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Principal
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends the academy regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the main office on the first morning of absence by 9.00am
- Informing the academy in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.

- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

6. Registration

All the academy doors open at 8.55am until 9.20am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to get off their bus and find their way into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register for the morning session must be completed by the class teacher by 9.35am. The attendance register for the afternoon session must be completed by the class teacher by 1.35pm (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present). The registers are then returned to the school office.

All attendance records are documented using SIMS, which is supported by Diverse Academies. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in accordance with policy.

7. Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9.20am the only way to get into academy is via the main office. Any pupil and parents who comes into the academy this way between 9.20 am 9.35am will be marked as late in the register (Attendance code L). Pupils arriving after the register is closed at 9.35am will be marked as late in the attendance record using an unauthorised attendance code. (Attendance code U).

Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the paper register for each pupil and in SIMS

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment, provided evidence of the appointment, and subsequently come to school later than 9.35am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and pupils have time to prepare for learning.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the academy will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Pupils who leave early after the register has closed due to illness the reason will be recorded in the register as present and a time of leaving, with the reason.

8. Absences

Parents/carers should contact the academy on the first day of their child's absence by 9.00am. When parents/carers notify the academy of their child's absence, it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences in the register and on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Principal has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will telephone home or send a letter requesting these details. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from the academy and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.35am to 9.45am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent, and we will contact the parent before 10.00am to check the reasons for the child's absence. If we do not receive a response other contacts will be telephoned. If there is second day of absence without reason, the procedure will be followed again to try and gain a reason for absence.

Failure to get a reason for absence will be followed up by a home visit and possible referral to Social Care.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from the academy long term, the academy will do all it can to support pupils and parents. Parents are asked to update the academy regularly by telephone about their child's health.

Where absence is due to acute anxiety or behaviour issues, teachers will work with parents on strategies to get pupils back into school. Outside agencies may be asked to get involved at this time.

Parental Request for Absence for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Head teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Principal will only allow leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. A form is available from the main office to request time off due to exceptional circumstances.

9. Addressing Attendance Concerns

The academy expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their education. It is the responsibility of the Principal and governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the academy with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to Early Help.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMS attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Principal to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.