



Hazel Leys Academy

Attendance Policy

Introduction

At Hazel Leys Academy we encourage our families to get children to school on time and every day. We believe that good attendance helps our children to make the most of the educational opportunities and experiences that we offer. Good attendance helps children to develop good, purposeful working habits. To this end, the Academy will do all that it can to ensure that children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems or barriers that impede full attendance are acted upon.

Statutory Education

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupils should be deprived of their educational opportunities by non-attendance.
- In the first instance it is the responsibility of parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- A small minority of pupils and their parents may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities and the Academy will aim to assist, with the help of external agencies if necessary.
- Most pupils want to attend in order to learn, to socialise with their peer groups and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.
- All pupils are expected to attend the Academy everyday unless they are unable to do so because of illness.
- Since September 2013 Academy attendance regulations have changed under Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which amends the existing 2006 regulations. As a result of the new government legislation Principals will no longer be able to allow any absence for the purpose of a holiday during term time. Any holiday in term time will be treated as unauthorised.

- The regulations do allow Principals to authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances”. Please find below a list of examples of absences that will be authorised and those which will now be classed as unauthorised absences.

Authorised Absence

- Sickness/illness.
- Emergency and planned medical appointments (parents are requested to make routine appointments outside school hours).
- Hospital scheduled appointments /treatment.
- Day/s for specific religious observance.
- Temporary exclusion.
- Academy closure for unforeseen circumstances.

Authorised absence in exceptional circumstances (authorised at the discretion of the Principal)

- Immediate family bereavement or close friend bereavement.
- Other compassionate grounds.
- Immediate family wedding/civil partnership taking part on a school day (this will be day of the ceremony and not days either side used for travel or holiday).
- Family crisis.
- Examinations off site.
- Educational Opportunity – Sport and Performance.
- Visit to a new school.
- Family re-location visit.

It is at the Principal’s discretion to determine the number of days a child can be away from the Academy if leave of absence is granted.

Absences not allowed under any circumstances (unauthorised)

- Family holiday no matter what length.
- Family trips/attending concerts.
- Leaving early to travel to an event.
- No evidence of an appointment with doctor/dentist.
- The Academy feels parental note is invalid.
- No explanation of absence is forthcoming.
- Birthdays.
- Shopping trips.

- Dropping siblings off.
- Caring for siblings.

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completing the 'Request for Absence' form which can be obtained at the Academy office. The Principal will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time.

Please be aware that the local authority has been given jurisdiction to impose fines for unauthorised absence and the Academy may be asked to report unauthorised absence.

For absence relating to illness of five days or more, the Academy may request a doctor's note to confirm the absence. We hope that parents will understand that we are bound by the changes in government legislation and make every effort to comply with the attendance regulations.

The Academy aims to maintain an attendance rate of over 95%.

Expectations Relating to Attendance and Punctuality

We expect the following from all of our pupils:

- Be in school, unless illness stops this from happening.
- Be prepared and ready to learn in full uniform.
- Be on time.
- Share problems or challenges that prevent them from being on time or in getting to the Academy.

We expect the following from parents:

- Get children to the Academy every day unless the child's illness prevents this from happening.
- Inform the Academy of any non-attendance by contacting the Academy office.
- Be responsible for children being ready to learn, well rested, fully equipped and in correct uniform.
- Collect children at home time on time. The Academy is notified in writing if their child is permitted to walk home alone. The safeguarding procedures will be instigated if there is no contact with the parent and the child is still at the Academy one hour after the end of the day.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from the Academy:

- Accurate record keeping for attendance and communication.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend the Academy without providing good reason.
- Prompt action on any problem notified to the Academy.
- Rewards to encourage good attendance.
- Fair processes and equity for all children.

Encouraging Attendance

The following strategies are implemented to encourage and monitor attendance:

- Providing stimulating learning opportunities and an ethos in which all members of the Academy community are valued. This is the responsibility of every teacher working at the Academy.
- Providing security of learning and a safe environment in which to learn.
- Parents are informed at induction of the importance of regular attendance and are advised of the consequences of non-attendance.
- Certificates are awarded for 100% attendance and pupils receive a badge for 100% attendance for the first full term and then subsequent terms, names are entered into a raffle for attendance prizes.
- Attendance is reported to parents three times each academic year and discussed at parents' evenings.
- Regular monitoring of attendance takes place.
- The Academy works in partnership with the Educational Entitlement Service.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend, the Academy responds by contacting home on the first day of absence if the absence has not already been reported. This measure is undertaken to ensure a child's safety..

- The Academy is particularly concerned about any pupil's attendance which fails to consistently meet 90%. This situation will be deemed to be persistent absenteeism.
- Pupils with poor punctuality will also be monitored by the Person responsible for attendance or other senior member of staff.
- If attendance or punctuality falls below 95% during the half term the parents will be contacted by the Person responsible for attendance.
- The Person responsible for attendance is responsible for: first day phone calls or texts, second day phone calls or text, letters and home visits. They will also follow the Local Authority's safeguarding procedures regarding a missing pupil.
- In continued non-attendance, the case will be referred to Educational Entitlement Service. This may, in appropriate cases, result in legal action.

- If there is no improvement, then the case will be referred for legal action, if one has not been made at an earlier stage.
- Throughout, the Person responsible for attendance will meet with the Principal in order to keep everyone informed.
- Rewards and consequences are in place and explanatory charts are shared in newsletters, meetings and assemblies. This information is also provided to parents.
- Academy attendance meetings take place each half term. Parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern, or pupils who have failed to improve their attendance following previous interventions, are invited to meet with the person responsible for attendance.

Re-integration

- Returning to the Academy after long-term absence requires special planning; e.g. pastoral support.
- The appropriate staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SENDCo may be required and a request for such will be made via the person responsible for attendance.

Academy Organisation

In order for any policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils, the importance of the education being provided. This means ensuring that staff arrive to lessons on time and are well prepared.

In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff groups such as the following:

Principal:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To report to the Academy Advisory Council, pupils and parents.
- To ensure that challenging but achievable targets are set.
- To liaise with the Senior Leadership Team regarding attendance matters.
- To ensure the operation of the attendance system and the collation of attendance data is in place.
- To monitor the work of the person responsible for attendance.

Liaising with Various Agencies When Appropriate

Good relations and working practices are essential. Agencies have difficult roles in that they endeavour to support both the Academy in meeting its legal obligations as well as the family in ensuring that the pupil's educational opportunities are maximised to the full. Some parents need the support of these agencies so that they can fulfil their legal obligations to their children. The Academy will work with these agencies when appropriate. .

- Educational Psychologist.
- Childrens' Services
- Social Services.
- CAMHS.
- School Nurse Service

Academy SENDCo: The SEN Coordinator (SENDCo) plays a key role in determining the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the Academy in order to raise the achievement of children with SEN. The SENDCo takes day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEN policy and coordination of the provision made for individual children with SEN, working closely with staff, parents and carers, and other agencies. The SENDCo also provides related professional guidance to colleagues with the aim of securing high quality teaching for children with SEN.

Punctuality

The issue of poor punctuality must be taken very seriously. When a pupil arrives late they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This reduces their chances of academic success. Poor punctuality can also cause social disruption – pupils may feel uncomfortable and embarrassed arriving to the classroom when everyone else is already settled. In fact, when one pupil arrives late it disrupts the teacher and the rest of the class, compromising everyone's learning.

Pupils who are persistently late (after close of register) may be referred to Educational Entitlement Service.