



Samuel  
Barlow  
Primary Academy

# Appendix to Attendance Policy October 2021

Office use

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<b>Associated documents:</b>			
Trust Attendance Policy <a href="https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2020/03/Attendance.pdf">https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2020/03/Attendance.pdf</a>		Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy <a href="https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/about-us/policies/">https://www.diverseacademies.org.uk/about-us/policies/</a>	
<b>Links to:</b>			
<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance">www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance</a>		<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance">www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance</a>	
<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings">www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings</a>		<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendanceactions-for-schools-and-local-authorities">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendanceactions-for-schools-and-local-authorities</a>	



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# 1 Introduction

**The agreed aims of this policy are to:**

- **Ensure pupils attend ‘every day possible’ so that they access full learning opportunities. The expectation is that children should maintain an attendance of at least 97%.**
- **Ensure compliance with the parental duty stated under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 for making sure their child of compulsory Academy age receives full time education.**

Poor attendance has been shown to impact on learning and attainment not just at Samuel Barlow Primary Academy but throughout a child’s education leading to limited life choices. For our children to fulfil their potential we have a duty to encourage, support and enforce good attendance.

It is the duty of our families and the Academy to ensure children access their full entitlement of education.

In line with Local Authority guidance, Governors at Samuel Barlow Primary Academy recognise the necessity of issuing penalty notices where attendance (particularly where absence is unauthorised), fails to meet those standards expected by the Academy (i.e. attendance should not fall below 90% in any 6 week period).

The Academy year is structured with sufficient holiday breaks across the year to enable the majority of families to arrange holidays outside of term time.

The legal requirement is that parents ensure children attend the Academy regularly. This is to give children as much opportunity as possible to make at least expected progress. Taking a holiday in term time which reduces attendance to below 90% in a 6-week period is deemed by governors not to meet this requirement.

Pupils are expected to attend the Academy for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.

There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** the Academy has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** the Academy has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child’s absence from the Academy after a parent’s request.

**The staff and governors expect:**

- An effective attendance policy, fully supported by parents / carers in partnership with the Academy.
- Children working in a stimulating environment with exciting lessons wanting to attend the Academy.
- Children to attend the Academy, regularly taking full advantage of all educational opportunities and for them to consequently make good progress.

- Children to establish good patterns of attendance at an early age (including Foundation Stage) in partnership with parents / carers.
- Special consideration and support to be given to pupils where diagnosed medical needs may impact on their attendance.
- The Academy to apply a rigorous and consistent approach to managing attendance where parents / carers do not ensure their child meets the Academy expectations.
- Ongoing attendance and punctuality issues to be investigated as a possible safeguarding, welfare, bullying or anxiety issue.
- The Academy Principal to retain the right to authorise holidays where there are extenuating or exceptional circumstances and the Academy Principal brings particular cases to the governing body for a joint decision.

Where there are **concerns** about attendance this needs to be addressed speedily and rigorously to ensure impact on learning is minimalised.

### **Concerns in attendance can be defined where:**

- Parents / carers take children out of the Academy in term time
- Parents / carers take children out of the Academy at the start of an Academy term / year or prior to or during test periods
- Children are absent on individual days whether explained or unexplained
- There is unexplained absence
- Patterns of absence become apparent, e.g. regular Mondays / Fridays
- Medical needs or extenuating circumstances impact on attendance

### **Holidays in term time:**

In line with government legislation, the Academy Principal is unable to authorise leave for holidays during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** which may be for the following reasons but is not an exhaustive list:

- A Funeral
- The wedding of an immediate relative

*All applications for authorised absence / holidays in term time are granted at the Principal's discretion.*

- Parents will be informed within 7 Academy days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- There are 190 Academy days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period. Samuel Barlow Primary Academy adheres to the Nottinghamshire Local Authority term and holiday dates.

### **Penalty notices**

In accordance with the guidance provided by Nottinghamshire LA, the Governing Body at Samuel Barlow Primary Academy have decided that a referral for a penalty notice may be made in the following circumstances:

- More than 3 days unauthorised absence over a 6-week period
- More than 3 days unauthorised absence where this is for the purpose of a holiday in term time

- Where parents / carers fail to ensure that their child attends regularly even though support has been provided by the Academy
- Where there is a repeated pattern of unauthorised absence leading to attendance below 90%
- Where a pupil is persistently late for 10 separate instances over a period of six Academy weeks and where these are signified as a “U” in the attendance register.

### **Penalty notices for poor attendance:**

Since September 2015, the Government has set the persistent absence threshold at 90% (or 10% absence); therefore, where the attendance of a pupil falls below 90% this can lead to a penalty notice being issued.

Parents / carers may be at risk of receiving a penalty notice where there are concerns about unauthorised absence, the legitimacy of an illness absence (not backed up with medical proof or doctors note) or, following support from the Academy, attendance does not improve.

It is recognised that pupils / families with individual needs will be given particular consideration and support in order to minimise the impact of poor attendance.

### **PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE**

99% - 100%	Excellent
97% - 98.9%	Good - above the national average (primary)
95% - 96.9%	Satisfactory – in line with the national average
93% - 94.9%	Requires Improvement (this equates to more than 1 day of absence every 4 weeks) / slightly below the national average.
90% - 92.9%	At Risk of Persistent Absence - well below the national average
Below 90%	<b>Persistent Absentee</b> (this equates to more than 1 day off every 2 weeks)

## **2 Persistent Absence Thresholds**

Absence includes holidays, illness, medical appointments and lateness.

A persistent absentee has an attendance of 90% or less.

90% attendance is equivalent to 19 days absence in a year. These pupils are missing 4 weeks of schooling a year, it will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best potential.

Pupils with 80% attendance are missing a day for every week of the Academy. It will be almost impossible to make at least expected progress.

## **3 Process for Monitoring Attendance**

- When a child’s attendance starts to fall the Academy will send an ‘Initial Concern Letter’ home.
- If attendance does not improve the Academy will write to the parents/carers advising them that their child’s attendance will be monitored for the rest of the academic year and

any unauthorised absence of over 3 days in a 6 week period may result in a penalty notice being issued.

- The Academy may also arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, family support advisor and the Academy attendance lead. This will be followed by a letter confirming outcomes of the meeting.
- Where there have been concerns shared with parents and support has been offered but attendance continues to be a concern, a referral to the Early Help Unit will be made or a request will be made for a penalty notice.

### **Sickness:**

The reason for absence should be notified to the Academy by 9:30a.m. on the first day of the absence. Failure to notify the Academy either by phone or WeDuc will lead to the absence being marked as unauthorised.

- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- If a parent telephones the Academy with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised, particularly if the child then gives us a contradicting reason for their absence. A child's current and previous Academy attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.
- Keeping a child off school with minor ailments such as a headache, stomach ache, sore throat or slight cold is not acceptable and may be unauthorised. Repeated absences will require us to request that medical evidence is provided. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming appointments, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of staff in the Academy office. (Please note: that the Academy is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)  
The Academy may decide to send a letter requesting medical evidence when there has been no reason given and/or the absence has been 3 days or longer
- Children should be absent from the academy for 48 hours from their final bout if they have had diarrhoea or vomiting
- Persistent absence due to illness may result in the Academy recommending children to take a health check.

### **Lateness:**

Samuel Barlow Primary Academy values punctuality as an important life skill.

Children must be in class by 9 a.m. each day or 8:50am for AM and 12.20pm for PM nursery. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time.

- Lateness will be monitored and the Attendance Lead will follow this up.
- If the arrival at the Academy is after the registers have closed at 9.00 a.m., the child will receive an 'L' up until 9.25am. After such time the child will receive a 'U' this equates to an unauthorised absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the Academy premises in accordance with health and safety.
- More than 10 unauthorised 'lates' with a 'U' code in a 6 week period could result in a penalty fine.

- If a child is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M' if we have seen proof of the appointment in the form of either a letter, an appointment card or text message. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of Academy hours or during holidays. Please note the academy may not authorise the time off if medical evidence is not provided.

## **4 Promoting Good Attendance**

We celebrate good attendance throughout our Academy in the following ways:

- Class attendance for the week is included in the weekly newsletter
- Children who have improved their attendance will receive a Recognition Award.

## **5 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governors' Role**

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Academies Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in our Academy. The Academy attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis. The governors have a responsibility for:

- Agreeing an Academy Policy Appendix to the overarching Trust policy, enabling the Academy to secure attendance which is at least in line with Trust, county and national expectations
- Promoting the importance of good attendance throughout the Academy and local community
- Upholding all aspects of the agreed Attendance Policy and Policy Appendix
- Supporting the Academy Principal to make joint decisions where applicable

### **Academy Principal's Role**

- To ensure parents and carers are informed about the Trust attendance policy and local Academy policy appendix.
- To develop strategies to improve attendance
- To outline the importance of good attendance to parents at every opportunity; e.g. new parents' meetings, open evenings, newsletters, via online media / WeDuc
- To outline to parents the procedure for notifying Academy about childrens' absences.
- To ensure letters are sent as stated in the procedure by the Attendance Lead
- To investigate absence where related to safeguarding or wellbeing concerns
- Liaise with staff to work with families to improve pupil attendance
- To enforce attendance procedures rigorously, including requesting for penalty notices to be issued where appropriate

- To analyse attendance for vulnerable groups with the FSA, SENDCo and Attendance Lead

### **Attendance Lead's Role**

- To attend the Attendance networks and work with the Trust to develop strategies to improve attendance
- To report attendance weekly, half termly, termly and annually to the Principal and to inform the ERM process
- To provide reports to class teachers before parents' evenings
- To deal with requests for leave in term time in the same week they are received
- To send letters in response to requests as agreed with the Principal
- To send letters confirming referral for a penalty notice
- To analyse patterns in attendance, including persistent absence
- To provide termly reports for the relevant governors committee
- To provide attendance information for end of year reports
- To manage certificates and celebration certificates

### **Office Manager's Role**

- To telephone parents where there is unexplained absence and record details
- To monitor attendance daily for pupils of concern and record details
- To inform the Principal /DDSL where a pupil with safeguarding issues is absent
- To refer to the class teacher, SENCo or Principal where absence may be due to medical needs or welfare issue

### **Office Administrator's Role**

- To monitor attendance daily for pupils of concern and record details
- To inform the Principal /DDSL where a pupil with safeguarding issues is absent

### **Family Support Advisor's Role**

- To work with families where absence is a challenge at the earliest possible time to ensure that children are supported and barriers to accessing education are removed

### **Teacher's Role**

- To administer registration efficiently and promptly at 9am and 1pm
- To communicate regularly to their pupils that they value maximum attendance
- To encourage punctual arrival at the Academy
- To be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence and speak to parents where there are any concerns
- Investigate where absence may be due to issues affecting pupil welfare, such as bullying/anxiety/home circumstances and put support in place
- Refer concerns to FSA, SENDCo and / or Academy Principal
- To inform the Principal / DDSL immediately if a child on protection plan (CP) is absent or if there are any concerns whatsoever about the whereabouts of a child
- To discuss attendance of those pupils below 90% with parents / carers regularly



## Parental responsibility

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the parents and carers are responsible for making sure that their child receives efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at Academy or otherwise.

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the Academy attendance policy. Parents must be informed that regular Academy attendance is essential and they, along with our Academy staff, have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

### Parents must ensure that:

- Their child(ren) is / are in the Academy ready for teaching by the start of the day from 9:00am.
- They inform the Academy of any absence and keep the Academy up to date of any prolonged absence. No communication around the reason for absence will be considered as unauthorised.
- They inform the Academy of leave as far in advance as possible.
- They make applications for leave in writing on the Academy's '**Leave Of Absence Form**', giving the reason for the request.
- They work with the Academy and (if applicable) other agencies, to improve lateness and attendance.
- They avoid medical and dental appointments for their child during the Academy day.
- Medical appointments don't take up a full day so children should only be absent for the length of the appointment.
- Their children attend the Academy before the appointment and return to the Academy immediately after.
- They do not take holidays in Academy term time.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at Academy they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs parental help in resolving
- Talk to their child's class teacher in the first instance.
- Talk to the Family Support Advisor

## Children's Responsibility

- To arrive at the Academy from 8:45 a.m. on time and before 9am to be ready to learn
- To report to the office if late.
- To attend the Academy on every possible day

### Samuel Barlow Academy roles (Attendance):

Executive Principal	Mrs. Lucy Spacey
Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Sarah Kahler
Office Manager (Attendance Lead)	Mrs. Deborah Marshall

**This policy appendix will be reviewed annually at the beginning of the Autumn term.**