



Cabot
Learning
Federation

Attendance Policy

Date: Adopted September 2016 – Last Review May 2020 – Reviewed
Annually, Cabot Learning Federation

History of most recent Policy changes

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
Date	Pages / Whole document	Description of Change	Origin of change (e.g. routine update, request for review)
September 2012		Implementation	
July 2014	Whole	Updating dates	
February 2016			
September 2019	Whole	Updating times of day and job titles.	
February 2020		Update to procedures for morning punctuality.	
May 2020	Whole	Updating Job titles and roles. Updating penalty notices re. poor attendance and punctuality	

Rationale

Under the 1996 Education Act, all children of compulsory Academy age must receive suitable education whether by regular Academy attendance or otherwise.

Parents and carers are under a legal requirement to ensure that children of compulsory Academy age receive full-time suitable education.

Regular Academy attendance is a key factor in promoting the achievement, welfare and social inclusion of students. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and at risk of achieving less in both primary and secondary school.

The Academy is committed to encouraging regular attendance, promoting punctuality and addressing barriers to education, reducing persistent absence rates.

The Academy has set the target of 96% for the Academy's overall attendance rate.

Aims

To assist maximum educational input and provide high achievement – 'every day counts'.

To encourage social experience and promote inclusion.

To prevent truancy and the exposure of students to situations in which their safety might be compromised.

To record the safe arrival of students in the Academy, allowing the safety of students to be checked in the event of emergency situations.

The Academy seeks to achieve this by promoting all students' welfare, ensuring that every student has access to the full-time education they are entitled to, ensuring that students achieve their full potential and equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed, enabling them to have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff, students, parents and carers to encourage regular attendance and punctuality as well as the procedures, sanctions and strategies available to the Academy if a student fails to attend school at a satisfactory level.

The Academy will maintain an ethos which places a high value on attendance and punctuality, making clear to students the disadvantage of irregular attendance and/or lateness, both socially and academically.

Post 16 students will be subject to the CLF Post 16 Attendance Processes.

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all students, their parents/carers and staff.

Senior Leadership Team

All members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements. This includes the monitoring of attendance data and issues in SLT meetings and promoting awareness of attendance matters.

Academy Principal

- a) The Academy Principal must ensure that the Academy meets all statutory requirements e.g. the maintenance of registers and the submission of all data.
- b) The Academy Principal will make sure that effective monitoring, support and intervention is in place for students whose attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern and will delegate this responsibility to the Assistant Principal for Inclusion, Pastoral Team Leader and Attendance Officer where needed.
- c) It is only the Academy Principal that can authorise absences and requests for holidays, which will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Councillors

The councillors have responsibility for ensuring that Attendance is monitored rigorously and key groups attendance is at national average.

Academy staff

All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it.

Every half day of absence has to be classified by the Academy (not the parent or carer) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why a cause of absence is always required.

All teaching staff must take the register on SIMS at the start of every lesson. Morning registration at 8.40am and afternoon registration during the fifth period of the day constitute the statutory registration of students.

Tutors

The tutor is the first point of contact between home and the Academy - in the absence of the tutor this will be a member of the Zone team.

Responsibilities of the tutor:

- Mark registers fully and promptly, ensuring that they are completed on SIMS by the end of that registration session and using the appropriate codes.
- Investigate with students any unexplained absences and report this back to the Attendance Officer.
- Using the data provided, discuss the tutor group's attendance for the previous week, having the initial discussion with any students with lower attendance (below 97%).
- Using the data provided, discuss the tutor group's punctuality (to school and lessons) for the previous week.
- Provide students returning to school after a time period of unexplained absence with a 'Parent/carers consent slip for unexplained absence' (Appendix N) to take home. If the student fails to return the slip in within two days of issue, tutors must report to the Pastoral Team Leader and the Attendance Officer.
- Organise the effective management of the 'tutor group notice board' to celebrate the achievements of the tutor group.

Pastoral Team Leader

The Pastoral Team Leader will review the data on a fortnightly basis in a meeting with the Attendance Officer/Education Welfare officer and make decisions about the level of intervention required, and by whom, and update the record of this on their Attendance Tracker. They will then employ strategies to improve attendance in consultation with the Attendance Officer, Assistant Principal and EWO where necessary. The Pastoral Team Leader will also use assemblies to promote the importance of attendance and the consequences of poor attendance, as well as celebrating good and significantly improving attendance.

Attendance Officer/Student Support Leader

Responsibilities of the Attendance Officer/Student Support Leader:

- Monitoring register taking of staff and reporting incorrect codes or failure to take registers on time to senior staff at John Cabot Academy.
- Ensuring that registers are accurate prior to the morning truancy text being sent to parents/guardians
- Aim to call parents/guardians when there is no response to the truancy text
- To analyse the attendance data and oversee the interventions of students with serious attendance concerns, generally <90%; for example, referring to relevant workshops, creating attendance plans and contracts, and liaising with other agencies and academy staff as required.
- Organising a rewards system for students being mentored or under an attendance plan whose attendance significantly improves e.g. certificates and vouchers.

Parent and carers

Under the 1996 Education Act, it is the law that parents or carers must ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and punctually. Allowing students to have unauthorised absence from the Academy is an offence and parents and carers may be reported to the Local Authority if their child(ren)'s absence from the Academy is a significant cause for concern.

It is vital that parent and carers positively encourage the attendance and punctuality of students and only support genuine reasons for student absence by following the Academy's procedures.

With regards to this, parents and carers must follow the Academy's procedures for reporting any absence:

- If a student is unable to attend the Academy due to illness (or any other reason), you should ring the student absence line on 0117 9763000 before 9.00am on each day of the child's absence.
- Should the reason for absence be due to sickness then the Academy expect the student back to the Academy 24 hours from the last symptoms. However, parents and carers are still required to contact the Academy every day.
- If parents or carers fail to report the absence prior to or on the day of absence, the student must bring a note from their parent or carer explaining the reason for absence on the day they return to the Academy.

- If a parent or carer has failed to notify the Academy of the absence through either a telephone call or note, they are expected to sign and return the unauthorised absence letter.
- Absence which remains unauthorised will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer for the Academy.
- Notification of absence for unavoidable medical appointments must be made a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the appointment by telephoning the Attendance Officer on the number above. Students will not be permitted to leave the Academy site unless we have a record of this communication. Parents and carers should make all medical appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.
- Parents and carers must, when requested, provide proof, such as an appointment card, when absences require further justification.
- Parents and carers should be aware that a letter or phone call does not in itself authorise the absence. Only the Academy's acceptance of the explanation will authorise the absence.
- Parents or carers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their child arrives punctually to school every day. If punctuality problems persist, parents or carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the students Pastoral Team Leader to improve the situation. Students are expected on site by 8.30am ready for registration at 8.40am to ensure they do not receive a late mark for the morning which would result in a detention being issued.

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to advise the Academy promptly of any issues which may impact on students' attendance, seeking advice from the Academy and other agencies where appropriate.

Students

- Students should attend the Academy every day unless prevented from doing so due to circumstances which the Academy deem acceptable.
- Students must arrive at the Academy punctually; 8.30am is the latest time we would expect a student to arrive as this leaves them sufficient time to prepare themselves for their first lesson.
- Students are expected to be punctual to all of their lessons throughout the day to minimise disruption to their fellow classmates and teaching staff.
- Students will not leave the Academy without the necessary permission.

Student attendance records

Authorisation of absence can only be made by the Academy who will code each absence in line with the DfE absence codes (Appendix A). Authorised absence would normally be for cases such as sickness, unavoidable medical/dental appointments and days off for religious observance or exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.

Authorisation will not be given for absence unless an exceptional circumstance has been met and therefore absence from the Academy due to birthdays, looking after siblings or unwell parents and carers or minding the house will not be authorised.

Under the School Day and School Year regulations, the Academy is able to set different session times for students during public examinations or for students in the Academy Reintegration Centre (ARC) or on a 'different day' timetable as part of the school's Behaviour Policy.

The Academy utilises the SIMS Attendance Module to record attendance, both within registration and at each lesson.

Requests for absence during term time

DfE regulations regarding holidays during term time state that no student may take holiday during term time, however special dispensation by the Principal may be given in exceptional circumstances. Authorisation for term-time absences are rarely authorised so JCA strongly advises parents not to make any reservations before receiving a response from the Principal.

Any requests for absence during term time must be made by returning a completed copy of the Exceptional Circumstances Request Form (Appendix J) to the relevant student's zone team with ample time for the request to be processed. Requests should be made with at least four weeks' notice. If the request is made at short notice and parents have not received a response before the first date of the planned holiday, they should assume that this absence has not been authorised.

The Academy Principal will make the final decision as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances. If, due to exceptional circumstances, leave is granted, the Academy Principal will determine the number of days a child can be away from the Academy.

Any absence taken without authorisation may lead to the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer. Parents and carers may be issued a Penalty Notice Fine for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the Academy (Appendix B).

Legal Framework for attendance

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents and carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or other (e.g. the parent or carer can choose to take their child off roll to educate them at home). A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen. From September 2015 all 16 year-olds are required to continue in education or training, until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18.

Local authorities have the power to prosecute parent or carers who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to comply with a School Attendance Order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996).

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.

Prosecutions by local authorities

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents or carers may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Only local authorities can prosecute parents or carers. At John Cabot Academy we work closely with our Education Welfare Officer and the Local Authority to take robust action when required, however, engagement with parents or carers and positive support plans is an important part of our approach to raise attendance.

The fines available to the courts if parents or carers are found guilty of the section 444 (1) offence include a fine of up to £1,000. If they are found guilty of the section 444 (1a) the fine is up to £2,500 and the court can also sentence them to imprisonment for up to three months (Appendix B).

Penalty Notice Fines

Penalty Notice Fines of £60 per parent/carer, per child are an alternative to the prosecution of parents or carers for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent or carer liable for the attendance offences or offences (Appendix B).

Penalties can be used where the student's absence has not been authorised by the Academy. At John Cabot Academy, Penalty Notice Fines may be requested for students in year 11 where there are more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence on the student's record (during a 7-week period). A session counts as a morning or afternoon registration mark. There are two sessions in a school day.

Penalty Notice Fines may also be requested for parents of students who have more than 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday or more than 10 'U' codes in a 7-week period. These codes occur when a student arrives to school after registers close at 9.00am without authorisation from the academy. Each 'U' mark counts as one session of unauthorised absence.

Procedures for responding to absence and unauthorised absence, including strategies and sanctions for responding to unsatisfactory attendance and persistent lateness

- If a reason for absence has not been communicated to the Attendance Officer on each day of a student being absent, the automated Truancy Call will go out to the parent or carer at 10.30am. This method of communication is effective in minimising the risk of students truanting from the Academy.
- If, despite attempts to contact parents or carers to ascertain a reason for a student's absence, there is no reason for the absence, it will remain unauthorised. Parents or carers will be able to view their child's attendance record through Insight.
- If a student is absent from the academy for more than 2 consecutive days without a reason being given, the Academy may refer the student to the Education Welfare Officer who will try and make contact with the parent or carers by telephone or carrying out a home visit.
- Students returning to school after a long period of absence are entitled to an engagement meeting where appropriate provisions may be set in place for the returning student, such as a part-time timetable.
- Off-site education providers inform zone teams about the attendance of students at their educational provision and are coded 'B' in the register. Any non-attendance at off-site education will be changed to the relevant mark by the Pastoral Team Leader. Students who are dual-registered at other schools are coded as 'D' in the register. This mark does not change in accordance with at other school.
- Zone teams and the Attendance Officer are responsible for the day to day management of attendance, absence and punctuality. High levels of student attendance will be promoted throughout the Academy by:
 - The Attendance data for students being reviewed every 2 weeks in a joint meeting with the Academy's Senior Leadership, Pastoral Team Leader, Student Support Services and the Academy's Education Welfare Officer. The aim of these meetings is

- to highlight those students with unauthorised absence and low levels of attendance, including concerning patterns of absence or persistent lateness.
- Close monitoring of students with below satisfactory attendance and those from vulnerable groups such as: children in care, students with special educational needs, ethnic minority students and pupil premium students.
 - Proactive investigation where it has been highlighted the student is experiencing attendance difficulties.
 - All staff will regularly use attendance data to help inform meetings with students e.g. progress review meetings and pastoral intervention.
 - Use of the Academy's student support services for students whose absence is due to social, emotional or medical issues whereby a supported return to their lessons would be of benefit.
 - Partnership work with a range of external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer, or Social Care Department to support students and families where wider issues affect Academy attendance.
 - Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be monitored by the Academy's Attendance Phases (Appendix C).

Academy Attendance Meetings

Academy Attendance Meetings (AAM) will be held for any students whose attendance and lateness persist to be below a satisfactory level. This involves parent or carers and students being invited to an AAM (Appendix D) with the student's Pastoral Team Leader and the Academy's Education Welfare Officer and/or Attendance Officer where appropriate. The aim of these meetings is to identify barriers to attendance and provide an opportunity to review the reasons for absence and lateness. At the AAM an action plan will be created that will support the student and parent or carer to improve their attendance. The plans set specific targets for attendance and may include the Academy requesting medical evidence for absence if it is illness related, such as, copies of prescriptions, appointment cards as well as parent or carers providing written permission for the Academy to contact medical professionals by signing a medical consent form (Appendix F). The Academy may decide to not authorise any absences unless proof of illness or medical consent is provided.

Persistent Absence

In September 2015 the threshold at which a student is classified as a persistent absentee was changed by the Government to be students missing around 10% of school sessions.

Academy Attendance Panels

An Academy Attendance Panel (AAP) will be held for any students whose attendance continues to fall below a satisfactory level with no good reason, this meeting will be held with the Academy's Education Welfare Officer (Appendix E). The AAP is a more formal meeting which sets out the parent's or carer's responsibilities in ensuring regular attendance to avoid the possibility of legal action. The AAP is the first stage of the formal legal process.

We always encourage parents or carers to work in partnership with the Academy at all times. If a child is experiencing problems attending, it is important for the Academy to know straightaway so that the appropriate support can be offered, i.e. Student Support, referrals to outside agencies, Single Assessment Framework (SAF).

Persistent lateness

The Academy records lateness at the start of the Academic day, as well as at each lesson for each student. If a student is persistently late this may result in disciplinary action being taken and Academy intervention.

Students are expected on site by 8.30am each day ready for registration at 8.40am to ensure they do not receive a late mark for the morning. A student's register mark should indicate that they are 'late' (L) in the event that they arrive to their lesson after 8.40am (without an explanation from a member of staff). If a student is late and arrives after 9.00am, their mark in the register should be recorded as 'late after registers have closed' (U), please see paragraph 3 of **Penalty Notice Fines** for what may happen if your child is persistently late after 9.00am. As part of the Academy's punctuality procedures, appropriate sanctions or rewards will be implemented for students who are late or have improved their punctuality.

Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

- Students arriving late to school must sign in at reception (Late Gate).
- Tutors will receive weekly data to share with tutees.
- Assistant Principal to lead key Attendance assembly and will always start assemblies with a review of each Zones Attendance.
- Attendance statistics are reviewed each term and shared with all students. The highest attending Zone will receive rewards.
- Attendance tutor group target competitions will be used to promote positive collective attendance with rewards.
- Individual monitoring reports for students to encourage and reward improvements in attendance and punctuality.
- Daily monitoring, mentoring and support for students.
- Punctuality contracts and reports will be used where a student is persistently late (Appendix G).
- Certificates awarded for students who have made significant improvements in their attendance and punctuality.
- Students with 100% attendance will receive a termly certificate, and there will be three celebration events per year.
- Students with 97+% attendance will receive a termly certificate, and there will be three celebration events per year.

Review and monitoring of the Policy

Monitoring and review will be undertaken by the Assistant Principal and updates made accordingly if there are changes to working practice or guidance from the Local Authority.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Implementation

Date: September 2017, Update February 2017
Addition of Late Gate detentions and rewards.

Publication

This policy can be found on the John Cabot Academy website

Review

Date: May 2020

List of appendices that can be found in Staff Resources / Student Support

Appendix A: DfE Absence Codes

Appendix B: Penalty Notice Guidance from South Gloucestershire Council

Appendix C: Academy Attendance Phases

Appendix D: Academy Attendance Meeting Form

Appendix E: Academy Attendance Panel Form

Appendix F: Medical Consent Form

Appendix G: Punctuality Contract

Appendix H: Penalty Notice Initial Request form

Appendix I: Attendance Concern letter

Appendix J: Exceptional Circumstance Request Form – Safeguarding Checklist

Appendix K: Application for Full Prosecution

Appendix L: 'How to improve a child's attendance' leaflet

Appendix M: Medical Advice for Parents Leaflet

Appendix N: 'Parent/carer consent slip for unexplained absence'

