



# PURPLE OAKS ACADEMY

## **Attendance Policy**

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## Introduction

Regular and punctual attendance is important. Students need to attend the academy regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Purple Oaks Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure students attend the academy and are 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 students who are registered at our academy on our academy 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 the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and staff at our academy work together with families and other professionals and agencies to ensure that all students 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 the academy frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to make good progress against age related learning expectations. Lateness can also impact on students' ability to follow their morning schedule and feel settled and ready to learn.

**A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time in primary education, have missed two whole terms of learning.**

## Aims and Objectives

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

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve students' 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 students of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with students, parents, staff and the Education Entitlement Service so that all students realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in students 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 teams, 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 students.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of 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, students, staff and Academy Advisory Council on academy attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting students who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at the academy which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance.

## 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 authorise absence. 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 academy without the permission of the academy.
- Term time holidays will not be authorised. Absence is only authorised during term time by the Principal in exceptional circumstances.

## Procedures

Our academy will undertake the following procedures to support excellent attendance:

- Maintain accurate registration processes.
- Maintain accurate attendance data.
- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, AAC, parents and students.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give details of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the academy.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Work with parents to improve individual student's attendance and punctuality
- Refer to the Educational Entitlement Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to academy initiatives to improve.

- Report attendance statistics to Northamptonshire LA and the DfE where requested.
- Ensure all staff are aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership team who hold the responsibility for monitoring attendance.

## **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 reason for absence book kept in the school office, this is then recorded directly onto SIMs.
- Modelling promptness and good attendance to students
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

### **Principal and Leadership Team**

The Principal and Leadership Team are 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 the Education Entitlement Service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Education Entitlement Service
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### **Admin staff**

The Admin staff are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Reason for absence/ late file is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

### **The Child and Family Support Mentors (Sharon Faulkner/Julie Quiery)**

- 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
- Meeting with families, where identified concerns have been raised to discuss how the school can help.
- Support parents/carers to ensure every child has good attendance and ensure full access to the academy day.

### **Parents and Carers**

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 academy office on the first morning of absence and daily thereafter (01604 434471)
- Informing the academy in advance of any medical appointments in academy time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Only making requests for authorised absence during term time in exceptional circumstances.
- Talking to the academy as soon as possible where a child's anxiety might be impacting their attendance, so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with

### **Registration**

The Academy doors open at 8.45 am until 9 am. This time is sufficient for all students to come into their classroom. Staff are always on hand to speak to parents/carers should the need arise at this time.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any student who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register on SIMs must be completed by the class teacher by 9.10 am and by 1.20pm. (Attendance code / and \ for students who are present)

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### **Lateness**

Once the gates/doors are closed at 9am, the only way to get into academy is via the academy office at the front of the building. Any student who comes into academy this way from 9am will be marked as late before the register closes in the attendance record. If a student arrives after 9.20am then the student will be marked a late after the register closes. Lateness is monitored and will be addressed should it become a regular occurrence.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to academy later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M) but medical evidence must be provided.

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 what each child is expected to achieve.

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.

Equally, if there are persistent incidents of parents picking up early (before 3pm) this will be addressed. Parents will be offered support from our Child and family support workers to identify and support to resolve the barriers to the child completing their full school day.

## **ABSENCES**

Parents/carers should contact the academy on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us 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. 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 discretion to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. 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 academy and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Admin staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those students who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will always contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

## **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they may be away from academy long term, the academy will do all it can to send learning materials home, so that they can keep up with their academy work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the academy will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside of the academy.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the academy will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from parents/carers for the academy to make their own enquiries.

## **Parental Request for Absence from the Academy for Holiday**

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Headteachers and Principals to authorise absence, specifically for holidays, of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Principals will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances apply.

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The academy expects attendance of at least 95% for all students.

It is important for children to establish excellent attendance habits early on in their primary academy career. It is the responsibility of the Principal and the academy staff to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In Key Stage 1 and 2 we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends the academy 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/carers 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 academy has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Entitlement Service.

The Education Entitlement Service (EES) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EES from the academy as part of the academy's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by an academy or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of an academy attendance order.

## **Monitoring Attendance**

Our admin staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Deputy Principal to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following the procedures listed on the attendance monitoring sheet.

