



Partnership Achievement Community Excellence

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# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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## **INTRODUCTION**

PACE Academy Trust recognises that all pupils have the right to access full time education. A good education helps to give children the best possible start in life. Evidence suggests that children out of school are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse and more likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour. Regular attendance is essential to enable students to take part in all the opportunities available and to develop their full potential. We are committed to working in partnership with our parents/carers who are responsible for ensuring their children access education. Students, staff and parents/carers, governors all have some part to play in securing these aims by implementing this policy.

## **AIMS**

This policy provides the framework within which all staff, directors, governors, parents, pupils, carers and external agencies can contribute to the development and maintenance of high attendance and excellent punctuality.

- To ensure a cohesive system for maintaining full attendance and excellent punctuality is in place, which is clearly communicated to all school staff, pupils, directors, governors and parents.
- To have an effective and efficient administration system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality.
- To offer pupils and parents/carers good support, advice and guidance on the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **For pupils**

- To attend school every day and on time
- To ensure they maximise their learning potential by taking responsibility for achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality
- To discuss with their teacher any problems that may prevent full time attendance or punctual arrival at school
- To support their fellow students and thereby their class in winning awards that relate to attendance and punctuality.
- To follow the Academy procedures for dealing with attendance and punctuality e.g., bringing in signed letters from parents after a period of absence or late arrival for the school day.

### **For Parents and Carers**

- To be fully supportive of the Academy with regard to attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure their child attends every day, on time and is prepared for the day.
- To support the Academy and their child (ren) by not requesting authorised absence for holidays, during term time, and minimizing dental and medical appointments during the school day.

- To follow the Academy procedures for dealing with attendance, by making contact with the Academy on the first day of absence and ensuring a signed letter is sent when their child returns to school.
- To contact the Academy immediately if they have concerns or if there are issues preventing full time attendance

### **For Teachers**

- To be a good role model and arrive to lessons on time
- To take the register at the beginning of every lesson in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- To take responsibility for dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality in relation to their class e.g. liaising with the attendance lead.
- To encourage their pupils to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality through monitoring and reinforcing the need for high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality.
- To assist in reintegrating any of their pupils after a period of prolonged absence.

### **For Senior Leadership Team**

- To raise the profile of good attendance and monitor the attendance of pupils allocated to their phases.
- To be responsible for regular liaison with the Inclusion Leader and EWO, regarding poor attendance of students and issues related to poor punctuality
- To liaise with parents as appropriate in response to attendance, punctuality and truancy issues; attending parental meetings as appropriate
- To ensure that teachers in their phases fulfil their duties regarding attendance and punctuality and take appropriate action when this does not occur
- To ensure that the Academy reward system in relation to attendance and punctuality is used effectively

### **For Office Administrators**

- Carry out first day calling/text messaging and establish reasons for absence including telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, send attendance letters.
- Ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Academy computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality, for example, processing registers.
- Prepare and distribute attendance data and reports to staff and SLT on a regular basis
- To liaise with the Deputy Head/Inclusion Leader and assist in following up poor attendance and punctuality, for example, organising attendance panel meetings with parents/carer, liaising with Education Welfare Officer (EWO), external agencies, making home visits, ensuring that student attendance targets are agreed and monitored.

## For the School Leadership Team

- Through Head / Deputy Head teacher/Inclusion Leader to co-ordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the Academy.
- To raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through the assemblies and the reward systems that are put in place.
- To analyse and act swiftly in response to report data on attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that the learning environment, on offer to students, creates the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that school expectations, in regards to this policy on attendance and punctuality, are communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

## For the Directors/Governors

- To annually review and agree the Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- To annually agree attendance targets
- To take a lead role in supporting the Academy in the implementation of its approach to attendance and punctuality, especially in response to parents in supporting unauthorised absence.

## ABSENCE

Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child(ren) attends the School on a regular and full-time basis. Every absence and half-day absence has to be classified by the Academy, as either authorised or unauthorised. Unauthorised absence will lead to investigations by the Academy staff or our Education Welfare Officer, who can offer support and guidance. For extended periods of unauthorised absence, where no explanation from parents is given, a Penalty Notice may be issued or legal action taken against parents.

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a student should miss school is if they are too ill to attend. This is an example of an authorised absence. Medical evidence will be required, for any absences of a week or more and for anyone with three or more odd day absences over a 6 week period with no justifiable reason provided.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. i.e. pupil birthday, having the day off to accompany a parent to a medical appointment, shopping for (uniform). This includes keeping students away from school unnecessarily, truancy and absences which the Academy considers to have not been properly explained.

## EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that Head teacher may not authorise any leave of absence (i.e. holiday taken in term time). They are only allowed to consider a leave of absence if the circumstances are classed as exceptional, i.e. compassionate grounds and permission has been requested to the Head Teacher. **It is not the right of the parent to take children away during term time.**

The Administration officers work with the Deputy Head/Inclusion Leader and Head Teacher, in overseeing any such requests from parents. If the Academy does not agree to the request then the absence will be recorded as

unauthorised. If the leave of absence involves any travel arrangement, these must not be booked until permission is granted by the Head Teacher. The leave of absence application form is available from the office administrators who pass the request to the Head Teacher along with the attendance certificate and any other relevant information. The Head Teacher will consider the request taking into account:

- The student's previous attendance history
- The time of the year regards any public or internal examinations
- Attendance and punctuality in the current and previous academic year
- The nature of the request and whether any other requests have been made

A letter of approval (or a letter stating the request is not approved) will then be sent to the parent/guardian clearly stipulating that approval is only given in these **exceptional circumstances** and that **no** further requests will be considered. Parents/Guardians are also informed that if any leave is taken beyond the dates agreed, a Fixed Penalty Notice\*\* could be issued to each parent and if applicable for each child.

**\*\* Fixed Penalty Notice is a fine imposed where a parent fails to ensure that their child is in education or has an unacceptable period of unauthorised absences. The Penalty Notice is £60 that must be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.**

All data relating to attendance will be kept for a minimum period of three years from the last date of entry.

## **PROCEDURES FOR REGISTRATION**

School attendance registers are legal documents. They are required by law to be called twice a day at the commencement of each AM and PM session.

### **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Attendance needs to be established once the children arrive in the classroom. Teachers should settle the class and call the names on the register, in the order that they appear on the register. There should be silence for this procedure. Teachers can only mark the register with present, absent or late. All other codes should be administered by the Administration Officer

Teachers should notify the school office if an explanation is received for the absence from the parent/carer. The Administration Officer has the responsibility to seek an explanation for a child's absence and the teacher/attendance officer to ensure that a note is received explaining reason for absence on the first day back to school.

The class teacher calls the register at 8.50 a.m. and the register closes at 8.55 a.m. Children arriving after this time are recorded as late (L code). Children arriving after 9.30 a.m. are recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). Pupils who are continually late after the close of register will either be referred to the EWO and/or parents could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (Fine of £60 rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days).

## **REPORTING ABSENCE**

Parents are expected to telephone the Academy on the first day of absence before 9.00am. If we have not received a note/message of the child's absence, the Deputy Head/Inclusion Leader will either telephone or text the parent/carer to establish the reason for the child not being in school and the length of time the pupil will be absent. After the third day of absence a phone call must be made, or a note forwarded from the parent/carer to provide an update and the expected date of return. The Academy will make contact on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, should the child still be absent and no contact has been received from the parent/carer.

If a child is absent for more than 5 consecutive days, medical evidence must be sent in to the Academy this can be a doctor's certificate, GP/medical appointment card, copy of prescription, hospital letter or a note from the GP is required. This should be given to the office administrators in order for the illness to be authorised

A letter **must** be sent in with the child on the day the child returns to school. A reason of "ill" or "unwell" is not acceptable. If a note is not received, this absence will be marked as unauthorised, until confirmation of absence is received. Following 5 days of absence with no communication from the parent and all contact attempted, the Academy will inform the EWO who may carry out a home visit.

### **MEDICAL/HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS**

Parents and carers must try and ensure where possible that any medical appointments are made after school or during the school holiday period. Should a child have a medical appointment during an am or pm session, the expectation is they will be returned to school following the appointment and not be taken out of school for the whole day. They will be marked as unauthorised for the session if they do not return to school and no explanation is given. An appointment card will need to be shown to the office administrators in order for the absence to be authorised in the first instance.

Once a month, an official register will be printed. The official register will highlight the number of authorised and unauthorised absences as well as the number of late marks for each child.

The school has a legal duty to publish the above information on the child's school report.

### **REWARDS & INCENTIVES**

The Academy operates a programme of rewards including class awards, trophies and individual certificates.

Teachers/Deputies/Head Teachers must take overall responsibility for encouraging and rewarding publicly the need for high attendance and excellent levels of punctuality. This will commonly be achieved through assemblies and encouraging a competitive spirit with other groups. Informal praise and formal awards should both be used and supported by all Academy Staff.

### **FIRST DAY CONTACT AND DEALING WITH ABSENCE**

Text messaging/ Telephone call home will be carried out on the first day of absence if the parent has not contacted the Academy with reasons for absence. Administration staff will attempt to contact any parent/carer on the first day of absence and establish the reason for absence. When a letter from the parent is not forthcoming, explaining the absence, the office administrators will process a letter **{Letter 1}** to the parent/carer requesting a reason to cover the dates(s) concerned. When this has been received they will update the registers and code them appropriately.

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored through the following computerised processes:

- Daily lists of absences
- Follow up procedures on the first day of absence
- Subject registrations
- Weekly Statistics
- Rewards and sanctions statistics for attendance and punctuality

Where students are likely to have a period of long absence, for example from a period of illness, then teachers should liaise with parents and make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Where there is a significant pattern of absence, Attendance Officer will:

- Start intervention at 95% **{Letter 1 weekly if appropriate}** and **1A** letter being sent home to parents/carers informing of the cause for concern and the negative impact on learning

- After 3 separate periods of absence the school will contact the parent/carer to discuss reasons why and may invite them to the school for a meeting
- If no contact is made a letter will be sent to the parents advising them that any future absences will require them to produce medical evidence and failure to do so will result in the absences been unauthorised **{LETTER MED EVIDENCE}**
- If attendance continues to be a concern a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer who will offer support and guidance, but may also refer to the LA to issue a Penalty Notice or consideration of legal proceedings
- For attendance between 95%-98%, we expect Attendance Officers and teachers to play an active role in advocating the importance of full attendance to both students and parents.

### **DELETIONS FROM THE REGISTER/REMOVAL FROM THE SCHOOL ROLE**

Parents must ensure they inform the Academy of any change of address, contact details or family circumstances. Should a parent advise they are moving and will be removing their child (ren) from the school role, the school must attempt to obtain the parent’s new address and if possible the name of the new school the child will be attending. If this information has not been supplied the Academy must inform their EWO if the child leaves without obtaining any forwarding information.

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, children will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Children withdrawn to be educated outside the school system (Educated otherwise)
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the child
- Left the school but not known where he or she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child

The Academy will report a child is Missing from Education to the LA, following 10 consecutive days of absence, when all checks have been exhausted. This will include: Telephone calls to all known numbers on the school system, including relatives, discussion with class teacher and known friends of pupil, home visit by Academy/ EWO. The school will email: [childrenmissingfromeducation@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingfromeducation@croydon.gov.uk) with the relevant information and await confirmation to remove.

### **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

*The Academy will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through the Head teacher/Deputy who will oversee the generation of attendance data and report to the SLT where there are any key issues.*

### **ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS**

**For use with the am and pm roll call.**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Statistical meaning</b>	<b>Physical meaning</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole school
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole school
@	Do not use	Unauthorised Absence LATE FOR SESSIONS	

B	Educated off site	Approved educational Activity	Out for the whole session
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
D	Dual registration	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
L	Late	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
S	Study Leave	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
U	Late after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
X	DCSF: School closed to Students	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
Z	Do NOT USE	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
!	DCSF X: Non-compulsory school age abs	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
#	School closed to Students and staff	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
*	DCSF Z: Student not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
-	All should attend/ No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session



*This policy is written to work with the Croydon LA Staged Approach. Schools & Academies have responsibility for carrying out stage 1 intervention. (Letter 1, 1A, Medical evidence & EWO refer). Stage 2 & 3 is carried out by your WPA Education Welfare Officer and when all avenues of support and guidance exhausted, a referral will be completed by your WPA EWO to the LA for consideration of legal proceedings, or Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave or periods of unauthorised absence.*

*WPA will be the main point of contact for the Coulsdon Cluster of Schools for any legal proceedings/Penalty Notices the LA issue, ensuring on the Head teachers behalf that they are carried out in accordance to the time frames. WPA will as required attend court and provide Section 9 witness statements as requested by the LA for all work carried out on behalf of the Coulsdon cluster of schools.*

## **APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Please read the following information before you complete the request.

As you are aware it is the policy of the PACE Academy Trust not to allow any holiday or extended leave during term time. However, if you wish to request an exceptional leave of absence you need to read the following advice and complete the form below.

This form must be completed prior to the requested leave of absence. Each request for exceptional leave will be considered individually and we will take into account:

- The student's previous attendance history;
- The time of the year regards any public or internal examinations;
- Attendance and punctuality in the current academic year;
- The nature of the request and whether any other requests have been made.

**A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent should a student take leave of absence without permission.**

Full Name of Student:	Tutor Group:
Full Name of Parent (s) taking child on exceptional leave	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	

Reason for request for leave of absence:		
Intended dates of absence:		
Name of parent/carers:	Signature:	Date:

<b><u>For Office Use only:</u></b>	
Form to be submitted to Head teacher along with registration certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreement given Yes/No	
Appropriate letter to be prepared for return to parent/carer and given to Head Teacher for signature.	
Signed:	Date:

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE NOT APPROVED

{Parent name}

{Address}

{Date}

Dear {Parent Name}

### Re: **Request for Leave of Absence**

I refer to your leave of absence request to take {student name} out of school for the period {dates}.

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that the Head teacher may not authorise any leave of absence during term time (i.e. holiday taken in term time).*

I am unable to authorise this absence, as it is not deemed as exceptional leave. Should you decide to go ahead with this holiday, a Penalty Notice request will be made to Croydon LA who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for taking a child out of school during term time. ***The Penalty Notice is £60 that must be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.***

I trust this will not be the case and you make alternative arrangements for your holiday during the school holiday period.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher name

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE APPROVED

{Parent name}

{Address}

{Date}

Dear {Parent Name}

### Re: **Request for Leave of Absence**

I refer to your leave of absence request to take {student name} out of school for the period {dates}.

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that Head teacher may not authorise any leave of absence (i.e. holiday taken in term time). They are only allowed to consider a leave of absence if the circumstances are classed as exceptional, i.e. compassionate grounds and permission has been requested to the Head Teacher.*

Under the circumstances your leave of absence request has been deemed as exceptional. I am able to grant you the leave of absence for the period {add dates} requested. Should you not return on the agreed dates and no explanation provided consideration will be given to request a Penalty Notice which is a fine of £60 that must be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

*I hope that everything goes as smoothly as they can under the circumstances and we look forward to {child's name} returning to school and catching up on their missed work.*

Yours sincerely

Head teacher name

**Letter 1**

Date >

<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>

Dear <name of parent / carer>

According to our records, <name of pupil> has recently been absent from school. You will be aware that it is the parent’s responsibility to notify the school on the first day of a pupil’s absence to explain the reasons why the <s/he> is unable to attend school and an expected date when <s/he> should return. Unfortunately we have not received any contact from you.

I am therefore writing to you to give you an opportunity to explain the recent absences. Please complete the tear off slip below and return it to the school as soon as possible. Any absence that hasn’t been explained within two weeks will be categorised as “Unauthorised” Absence – an explanation of this term and the possible consequences are attached.

If you wish to discuss this letter further, please contact me on <school telephone number>.

Yours sincerely  
<School Contact>  
Designation  
School

Please complete this slip and return to <school> as soon as possible.

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Dates of unexplained absence:

Explanation for the above dates of unexplained absence:

Failure to return this will result in absences coded as unauthorised

Parent/Carer Signature..... Date.....

## Letter 1a

<Date >

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Name of Parent>

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. We then issue a first Letter to register our concern with parents.

We are therefore writing to you due to <Name of pupil>'s current level of attendance:

Attendance <current attendance> %

Authorised Absence <current AA> %

Unauthorised Absence <current UA> %

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child's future progression.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

90%: 19 days absence a year

Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.

85%: 29 days absence a year

The Government classes Young People in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact <named school person> on <telephone number>

Yours sincerely

<School contact>

## Medical evidence letter

Dear

**Name of Child**

**DOB**

**School**

**Attendance Percentage**

Regular attendance at school is a major focus for the Department for Education (DFE) and PACE Academy Trust. In an effort to improve {child's name} school attendance, schools are required to challenge parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly without any known justified cause.

{Childs name} attendance this academic year is currently xx%. This is considerably below what the DFE and the school consider being an acceptable level of attendance.

It is the head teacher's decision as to whether to accept any parental explanation for absence, and that I need to make you aware that **absences due to illness will no longer be authorised without medical evidence. Some examples of medical evidence include: a letter from your doctor, a copy of your child's prescription or a medical appointment card.**

I will be monitoring your child's attendance and should there be any further unauthorised absences I will refer you to our Education Welfare Officer, who will invite you to attend a meeting in school to discuss your child's attendance.

**Every day in school counts towards Xxxxxx's future, and I thank you in advance for supporting our School in ensuring excellent school attendance.**

If you would like to talk to me more about your child's attendance please contact me.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Position)

(Name of Organisation)

## Referral to Education Welfare Officer

Dear [Parent]

**Name of Child**

**DOB**

### Re: Referral to Education Welfare Officer

You will recall that I wrote to you on (date) regarding Xxxxxx's poor attendance at Xxxxxx School. You will notice that further unauthorised absences have occurred.

Unfortunately Xxxxxx's attendance has failed to improve sufficiently and you have failed to contact me at the school. I am therefore referring you to our Education Welfare Officer who will invite you to attend a meeting at the school to discuss ways to support you to improve your child's attendance. Consideration may also be given to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence.

If you wish to make me aware of any difficulties or do not understand aspects of this letter please contact me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Position)

(Name of Organisation)