

The South Leeds Academy

Attendance Policy

Introduction:

The South Leeds Academy is committed to providing full and effective educational provision for all students on roll. The law states that Children of compulsory school age have the right to an appropriate full time education, regardless of aptitude, ability and additional or special needs. The South Leeds Academy recognises that irregular attendance disrupts the continuity of learning, leads to underachievement and impedes a young person's ability to develop and maintain friendships, which are essential to their social and emotional wellbeing.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Regular attendance is essential to ensure that students achieve the best possible outcomes from their educational provision. Regular attendance encourages students learning, development and progression whilst also enabling teachers to deliver continuity of lessons.

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend their educational provision regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of the Academy, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- * Attendance
- * Behaviour Management
- * Health and Safety
- * Access to the Curriculum
- * Anti- bullying

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Whilst it is the legal responsibility of Parents/Carers to ensure children of compulsory school age attend their educational provision regularly, helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility. Parents/Carers, students and all members of Academy staff have vital roles and responsibilities to ensure Young People are able to access their educational provision on a regular basis. The Academy endeavours to:

- Provide Parents/Carers with registration certificates outlining your child's attendance both on request and at regular intervals as required, for example at parents evening.
- Celebrate positive attendance by displaying individual and group achievements via Academy media.
- Reward positive and/or significantly improved attendance.
- Visit Parents/Carers when students are absent in order to support their return to educational provision as necessary.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from educational provision is required to be classified by the Academy, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. **Parents/Carers are not able to determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised**, but are expected to notify the Academy of any reason for a student's absence. The Academy cannot accept reasons for absence provided by a student.

Authorised absences are when a student has been absent for a substantial reason, for example, some illnesses, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall within the Academy day, emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances. Verification may be requested for any such instances.

Unauthorised absences are absences which the Academy does not consider reasonable and/or cannot be verified. Whilst the Academy is committed to supporting students and their families this type of absence can lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings. Below are some examples of unauthorised absences, however, this list is not exhaustive.

- Parents/Carers allowing children to be absent unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences without an explanation deemed acceptable by the Academy
- Students who arrive at their educational provision after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children, birthdays or for translation purposes
- Students who do not attend owing to lack of uniform
- Day trips and unauthorised leave taken during term time

Should your child be reluctant to attend it is essential that Parents/Carers contact the Academy in order to identify any support, which may be required and/or address any underlying issues. The Academy has a large support network and a dedicated team of professionals able to assist.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 11% or more of their education during the current academic year, regardless of the reason for absence. Absence at this level will have a considerable negative impact to a child's educational prospects and development. Therefore, the Academy requests Parents/Carers full co-operation to support your child's attendance in the best interests of their development.

PA students are tracked and monitored by the Attendance Team, who are able to offer a variety of support strategies, prior to formal action being instigated where appropriate.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

Contact the Attendance Office no later than 8.00am on each day of your child's absence.

- Telephone: 0113 212 7162
- Text: 07624 808 604
- Email: attendance@tsla.org.uk

The Attendance Team may require medical verification in order to consider authorising the absence. An appointment card from the doctors will suffice (to be submitted within 5 days).

If your child is absent we will:

- Text you if we have not heard from you.
- A member of the Attendance Team may conduct a home visit.

Absence owing to illness:

Should your child be too ill to attend please notify the Academy as outlined in the 'Absence Procedures' section. The academy may request verification of the illness which should be submitted within 5 days. This can be helpful to assist with making appropriate plans to support your child on their return, for example, a risk assessment may be required.

Appointments:

Parents are expected to arrange medical/dental appointments outside of the Academy day. However, when this is not possible, parents should submit evidence of the appointment to the Academy in order for the Academy to consider authorising the absence (evidence to be submitted within 5 days). Without verification, the Academy may not be able to consider authorising the absence.

Punctuality:

High levels of punctuality are expected at all times, in order to ensure students are ready to learn. The **Academy day starts at 8.15am** and we expect your child to be present during Form at the start of this session. Should your child miss the start of the day, they may miss work and vital information/news for the day. Students arriving late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for your child and can encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

In accordance with Regulations, if your child arrives after the register has closed they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution if the problem persists. The Academy takes punctuality very seriously and addresses lateness in conjunction with the behaviour policy.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the relevant Academy staff to resolve the problem. However, you can approach the Academy at any time if you are having problems getting your child to the Academy on time.

Leave during term time:

From September 2013 the Principal is not permitted to authorise leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, for which verification should be provided. This means that should your child(ren) take leave during term time, the absence **will not be authorised** and a Penalty Notice of up to £60 per parent per child may be issued.

Should leave be granted under exceptional circumstances, students must return on the agreed date. Failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that Children Missing from Education (CME) procedures will commence and your child's place at the Academy may be at risk.

Students who have been removed from the Academy's roll will be expected to re-apply via the standard in year admissions route should they wish to return to the academy.

Religious Observance:

Absence owing to religious observance will be coded as “authorised absence”. In general, one day will be authorised per occasion when the day is exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the Parent/Carer belong.

Where necessary, the Academy will liaise with, and seek advice from, the relevant local religious bodies.

Academy targets and initiatives:

The minimum level of attendance as determined by the Government is 95% attendance.

Students will be expected to take note of their attendance on a weekly basis in their student planners. This will enable Parents/Carers and students to monitor their attendance against the minimum expectation of 95%.

The Academy offers various initiatives and rewards throughout the year to acknowledge positive and improved attendance.

The Attendance Team:

All staff are responsible for ensuring the attendance of students on roll at the Academy meets the expectations determined by the Government. The Academy employs a dedicated Team of staff to work within the Attendance Team. The Team includes an Attendance Officer, Attendance Administrator and two Family Support Workers.

The underpinning principles of the Attendance Team are to:-

- treat all families with professionalism and respect, and display understanding of equality and diversity.
- ensure that Safeguarding is considered throughout assessment and intervention with students and families, in order to contribute to the best possible outcomes for all young people.
- work with individual students and their families to assess and respond to their educational needs and to ensure that young people do not remain disenfranchised from the educational system.
- engage with agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to ensure that the welfare and protection of all young people remains paramount.
- ensure that all young people have access to educational provision suitable to age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have.

The Attendance Team implements various assessments strategies in order to identify the causes of poor attendance and devise action plans to resolve difficulties and improve attendance. These strategies may include offering the opportunity for families to engage in a Common Internal Record (CIR) and/or a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in order to identify any additional support needs.

In situations where Parents/Carers fail to ensure their child's regular attendance, The South Leeds Academy may, where appropriate, instigate legal proceedings. The Academy can also pursue Education Supervision Orders for students who refuse to comply with the reasonable boundaries and expectations set by Parents/Carers, Academy and Local Authority.

Attendance Blitz days:

In order to promote attendance, the Academy may conduct attendance blitz days at the start and end of each half term. The objectives of the blitz days are as follows:

- To carry out home visits to students who are absent from the Academy on the specified date, regardless of whether Parents/Carers notify the Academy of the reason for their child(ren)'s absence.
- To raise the profile of attendance amongst students, families and the community.
- To ascertain the reasons for absence whilst using this information to resolve individual issues.
- To identify any necessary cohorts of students who may require additional support to increase their attendance and/or require further action.
- To demonstrate attendance strategies used to improve attendance across the Academy.

Penalty Notices:

The South Leeds Academy implements the Penalty Notice system in conjunction with the working practices of Leeds City Council.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Overt truancy (including students recorded as absent as a result of attendance blitz days).
- Parental condoned absences
- Unauthorised leave taken in term-time
- Persistent late arrival to the Academy (after the register has closed)

Leeds City Council issue Penalty Notices on behalf of the Academy. Penalty Notices are £60.00 per parent per child if paid in full within 21 days, or £120 per parent per child within 28 days. Failure to settle the Penalty Notice within the specified time period may result in legal proceedings being taken by the Local Authority. This may result in a summons to the Magistrates Court, where if found guilty you may be fined up to £1,000 per parent per child.

Contact details:

It is essential that we have your correct contact details on record at all times. It is your responsibility to ensure we always have an up to date contact number and the correct address.

Further information:

Should you require any further information and/or advice please do not hesitate to contact The South Leeds Academy on 0113 212 7162.

Date of Policy: 1st September 2015 Review: 31 August 2016