



Attendance and Lateness Policy

Rational

Four Acres is committed to providing high quality inclusive teaching and learning for all pupils. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to aim for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should therefore be attending school, on time and every day that the academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. In law every parent of a child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that their child attends full-time education (section 7 of the Education Act 1996). Full time education means attendance of 190 days, 380 sessions during the school year from 1st September to 31st August.

Aims

- To continue to improve the overall percentage of attendance of pupils at Four Acres.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the academy community.
- To develop a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and academy.
- To implement a system of rewards for good attendance.
- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Rights and responsibilities

Parents and carers:

- are responsible for making sure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, dressed appropriately in academy uniform and equipped ready to learn;
- must inform the academy on the first day of absence before 9:30am of the reason for absence by phone, letter or personal visit (via an adult). If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach ache, cold etc. parents/carers should inform the academy and bring

them in. If they do not get any better, the academy will contact parents straight away to collect them. It is, therefore, essential that parents/carers keep the academy up to date with contact details;

- must make an agreement with the academy in advance for any absence they wish to authorise;
- must make every effort to ensure the child’s full attendance, including not taking holidays in term time and not arranging medical and dental appointments in academy time wherever possible;
- expect the academy to support and encourage them in continually seeking ways to improve attendance at Four Acres.

Pupils will:

- be listened to and respected;
- have individual records of attendance and punctuality;
- regularly celebrate attendance as part of assemblies.

The Academy will:

- ensure accurate and daily registers are maintained on pupils in the academy;
- authorise absences, where appropriate for ‘very exceptional circumstances’;
- ensure parents are fully informed of their responsibilities;
- publish expected academy times and holidays (including inset days);
- keep parents informed of attendance levels at parents’ consultation meetings and through the academy newsletter, notice boards and website;
- reintegrate positively any pupils that have been absent for a significant period of time;
- monitor data to identify patterns of attendance and resource accordingly;
- liaise with external agencies such as the Educational Welfare Service, School Health Nurse Team or Social Care to help support and improve attendance;
- discuss individual pupil attendance with class teachers especially for those children where attendance is a concern;
- ensure rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used;
- follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought;
- work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these;
- consider the use of penalty notices for poor pupil attendance.

The Education Welfare Service will:

- meet regularly with the School Family Support lead and/or the Executive Head Teacher to monitor levels of attendance and discuss individual pupils;

- assist the academy in setting attendance targets;
- provide comparative attendance data;
- take appropriate legal action against parents who do not complete their statutory obligations;
- undertake casework of those pupils referred to their service by the academy.

Further Information

This section will provide details on the following absences:

- Authorised absence
- Unauthorised absence
- Holiday in term time
- Medical and dental appointments
- Persistent Illness
- Lateness

Authorised absence – an absence agreed by the Executive Head Teacher after a discussion with parents/carers:-

- Very exceptional circumstances
- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting

Unauthorised absence – an absence not agreed by the Executive Head Teacher or an unexplained absence. Unauthorised absence puts parents/carers at risk of a penalty notice being requested (See below – penalty notices) or a referral to the Education Welfare Service in order to improve attendance.

It is highly unlikely that absence will be authorised in these cases or those that are similar:

- relatives coming to visit
- cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- family day trips
- visiting family/friends that have different half terms or holidays
- because a child has high academy attendance
- errors made when booking the holiday
- children’s or family members birthdays
- parent or sibling illness
- waiting for a delivery or an engineer to arrive at home
- waiting for academy uniform to be washed/dried
- poor weather conditions
- attendance at family holidays abroad

- holidays that have been won as prizes or given as presents

As an academy it is our responsibility to determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A letter or telephone call from parents/carers does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the academy’s acceptance of the explanation will do this.

Absences will be authorised for days of religious observance such as Eid or Diwali providing that a leave of absence request form (see appendix 1) has been completed and received by the main academy office in advance of at least 2 weeks prior to the absence.

Holiday in term time

In line with the 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances.**

- All family holidays taken during term time will be recorded as ‘unauthorised absence’.
- Permission must be sought by completing and returning a leave of absence request form (see appendix 1) before booking any time out of the academy for a child. Forms can be obtained from the academy office. The Executive Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to be absent during term time for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Wherever possible, parents should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the academy day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at the beginning or end of the academy day. Most medical appointments do not necessitate absence for a whole day and it is the parents’ responsibility to collect their child from the academy to take them to appointments and to bring them back to the academy once their appointment is over.

Persistent Illness

If a child is regularly absent due to sickness a parent/carer may be invited into the academy to discuss their child’s absences. This discussion may include the Executive Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, School Family Support Lead, an Educational Welfare Officer and/or a School Health Nurse. When a child is regularly absent due to illness the academy will request that a parent/carer provides supporting medical information in order to authorise further absences. If no supporting medical information is provided for a child’s absence, as requested, then absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Punctuality

We expect our pupils to have regular and punctual attendance. Pupils who are late can suffer three negative results:

- The loss of teaching and learning suffered by the pupil themselves and the feeling of being unsettled;
- The effect of the interruption to other children as the class teacher is taken away from the task at hand;
- The levels of unauthorised absence can rise which can lead to the potential risk of a penalty notice being requested (see below - penalty notices) or a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

The academy day starts at 8:45am and registers close at 8:55am. If children arrive after registers have closed at 8:55am they must enter the academy via the office and will be recorded as late (L), if an acceptable reason is given to office staff.

Children arriving after 9:30am will be given an unauthorised code (U) which counts as an unauthorised absence and can be used when considering the use of a penalty notice.

Four Acres Academy will use the following strategies to help prevent and reduce lateness:

- Informing parents/carers by letter if a child/children is/are persistently late in one term;
- Informing parents/carers by phone if persistent lateness is not improving following a letter;
- Inviting parents/carers in for a meeting with the Executive Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher and the School Family Support Lead if persistent lateness continues. An Educational Welfare Officer may also be present during these meetings;
- We will recognise improvements in lateness by acknowledging this with parents and children;
- Incentives to encourage regular punctual attendance such as “on time” raffles in classes are put into practice;

- We will acknowledge expectations to achieve full attendance for children whilst recognising health concerns of some children who will be unable to attain this.

Pupils should be collected at the end of the academy day at 3:10pm. If a parent/carer is going to be late collecting their child they should ring the academy office. Any parent who regularly collects their child late or before the academy day has finished (before 3:10pm) will be invited to meet with the Executive Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher and/or the School Family Support Lead to discuss the matter.

Penalty notices

The law states that;

Under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered.

Under section 23(1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, a parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly is guilty of an offence.

- A Penalty notice may be issued if a child has 4 days (8 sessions) unauthorised absence within the same term or 10 week period. The penalty notice is fixed i.e. the same amount for 4 days as it is for 10 days. This means that a fine could be issued for a child having a 1 day unauthorised absence each week for 4 weeks.
- Penalty notices can be issued for term time holidays i.e. a holiday of 4 days or more during term time which has been recorded as unauthorised. The same would apply for ‘long weekends’ which amount to 4 days within a term or 10 week period.
- Penalty notices can be issued for persistent lateness.
- The penalty notice will be for **each** parent/carer to pay **£60 per child** within 21 days or **£120** within 28 days. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines “parent” to include all natural parents, whether married or not, any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child, and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child.
- If full payment is not received within this time Bristol City Council is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of unauthorised absence by the child. If proven, this can result in fines of up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences. If found guilty the parent will have a criminal record.

Procedures

We will send a letter to all of our parents/carers at the beginning of the academy year setting out our expectations on attendance and lateness. This will happen during the beginning of term 1.

Registers

- Registration is a legal process which takes place in every class twice a day from 8:45 – 8:55am and 1:15 – 1:25pm. Each class will take the register by calling out children’s names. The teacher, learning support assistant or pupil may do this, but it is the class teacher’s responsibility to ensure that the register is completed correctly. All absent pupils will be given a (N) code. The class teacher must enter this code even if they know the reason for the absence as it is the responsibility of office staff to enter the correct code. If letters, notes or verbal reasons for absent pupils are given to a member of academy staff, either by the child’s parent or another adult, these are passed directly to office staff. All registers must be completed either directly online into the SIMS system or paper based and then sent to academy office by 9am and 1:30pm. Office staff will check any (N) codes given to absent pupils, enter the correct registration code for absent pupils and enter the registration data into SIMS, if it has not been completed directly into SIMS by teachers.

First day calling

Parents/carers are requested to contact the academy on the first day of absence before 9:30am and either speak directly to academy staff or leave an absence message.

If no message has been received then office staff will contact parents/carers to seek an explanation. This is known as first day calling.

If no explanation is provided for a pupil’s absence, academy staff will endeavour to make contact with the parent/carer by either repeating the first day calling procedure, making contact with emergency contact number(s) to obtain an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer, speak to the parent/carer at the end of day, if collecting other children, or when the pupil returns and/or undertake home visits. The academy recognises that pupils who are absent may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquires, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk.

Parents/Carers will be challenged if they fail to inform our academy for the reason of absence or if the reason is unacceptable.

Procedures will be most effective when applied to every absence and give a clear message that absences are not allowed for reasons other than those determined by the law.

It is the view of Four Acres that first day calling works because:

It raises the awareness of the importance of full attendance;

It addresses problems before they become serious;

It builds the partnership between home and academy;

It sends a clear message to parents and children that they will be missed;

It assists parents and children to encourage early contact with the academy and reduces casual absence;

It helps to reduce short term absence and thus reduces our overall absence rate;

It alerts parents/carers who may be unaware that their child is truanting or missing and at a possible risk.

Four Acres will use the following strategies to manage pupil absence:

We expect pupils to have 100% attendance and parents/carers have a responsibility to make sure their children reach this expectation. We take appropriate action if the attendance of a child falls below 95%.

Parents/carers will receive a letter following the end of each term letting them know the attendance for their child if it is below 95% and let them know that attendance will be closely monitored.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% over a short term period and the academy has been unable to establish an acceptable reason, the School Family Support Lead will make contact with the family to discuss concerns. This will enable the academy to support the family in improving attendance and punctuality.

If no improvement is seen after initial contact, parents/carers will be required to attend an academy meeting/attendance surgery with the School Family Support Lead, and/or Educational Welfare Officer, Executive Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

Further action will be taken if the frequency of absence remains a concern. We can make the decision to no longer authorise a pupil's absence unless parents/carers provide supporting medical information, give parents/carers warnings of a penalty notice and/or seek consent for the school health nurse team to become involved.

Pupils with poor attendance may be given an individual target and involved in various incentive arrangements and awarded for improvements

Breakfast club may be offered if it is felt that this service would be of support and could help improve attendance and punctuality.

Academy staff will let parents/carers know if we are concerned about their child's attendance at parent's consultation meetings.

Penalty notices may be requested if the criteria of 4 days (8 sessions) or more is met.

When we have exhausted our attempts to improve a pupil's attendance, a referral to the

Education Welfare Service will be made.
Attendance data is reviewed regularly.

Promoting and Celebrating good attendance

At Four Acres we like to ensure good attendance is promoted and positively acknowledged through:

The presence of the Executive Head Teacher or a senior leader at the entrance of the KS2 doorway;

Attendance display boards in the entrance of the KS2 doorway and the academy entrance area;

Weekly newsletters, notice boards and website;

Daily breakfast club;

Regular assemblies (weekly, end of each half term and end of academic year) to celebrate pupils with outstanding attendance and punctuality including those pupils with 100% attendance and the class with the highest attendance. Attendance data is shared with pupils during these assemblies as we believe this develops healthy competition between classes and engages teachers in conversation with their classes about attendance;

A variety of rewards and incentives given including stickers, certificates, prizes, trips, the Four Acres gold box, etc;

Every half term the class with the highest attendance is presented with a reward;

Annual end of year celebration for those pupils with outstanding attendance (98% and above);

KS1 and 2 pupils are encouraged to leave their parents/carers at the door each morning and come into school independently;

Pupils who have been absent are always welcomed back into class in a positive manner;

Pupils are regularly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance and punctuality;

A welcoming learning environment that supports and celebrates its learners;

Parent’s evenings/consultation meetings.

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

- The School Family Support Lead and/or the Executive Head Teacher regularly meets with an Education Welfare Officer in order to monitor attendance data and to identify and support any child whose attendance or punctuality is a source of concern. This may include a further referral to other agencies, such as the School Health Nurse Team or First Response.
- The School Family Support Lead will be responsible for the monitoring of attendance and punctuality each term.

- SIMS will be used to generate attendance data.
- Any issues arising will be reported to the Executive Head Teacher and the Education Welfare Service.
- Regular reports throughout the academic year will be made by the School Family Support Lead to the local governing committee on both positive and negative issues to do with attendance and punctuality.

This policy and procedure was adopted by the Directors on: Date 12 / 01 / 16

Director 1 Pat Triggs

Director 2 Robert Lane

Signature:

Signature:

Date:

Date

This policy and procedure was published on: Date / / Signed: R Barfoot

This policy and procedure is due for revision on : Date



Four Acres Academy

Application for Leave of Absence for a Pupil in Term Time in Exceptional Circumstances Only

Important Information for Parents/Carers

Good attendance is linked to higher achievement. Poor attendance can be a cause of underachievement. *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that term time holidays cannot be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.* This is because of the impact upon progress and learning. Each request for leave of absence is reviewed by the Executive Head Teacher on an individual basis and any additional information will be considered. *If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken anyway, you risk a £60 penalty notice per child per parent/carers being requested.*

Parents do not have an automatic right to take their child on holiday during term time. As parents you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular attendance.

I wish to apply for the Leave of Absence from Four Acres Academy to be granted to:			
Name of Child(ren)			
Year Group/Class			
I am applying for leave of absence from:		to:	
for the purposes of:			
Number of school days missed			
Date of return to school			
Signature of parent/carers:		Print Name:	
Date:			
TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMY STAFF			
Date Received		Current Attendance	
Attendance Last Academic Year		Other Comments	
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE EXECUTIVE HEAD TEACHER/DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER			
Absence has been:	Authorised	Unauthorised	
Comments			
Signed:		Date:	
Position:			