



# The Academy for Character and Excellence



## Attendance Policy

Reference: TP/WP/Safeguarding

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Author	<b>WP/RR</b>	<a href="http://www.acexcellence.co.uk">www.acexcellence.co.uk</a>
MAT Schools	<b>Redhills Primary Shaldon Primary Collaton St Mary Galampton Primary</b>	<b>Totnes St John's Brixham Primary</b>

## Who should use this policy?

This policy will apply to all parents of children attending any school within the Academy for Character and Excellence in relation to legislative and Trust attendance requirements for their children.

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless significant legislative changes occur before the review date.

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## 1. Introduction

The Trust is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, punctual, daily attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage.

The Trust actively promotes and encourages 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils. We recognize that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

## 2. Aims

Psalm 92:12

“Those that live like Jesus will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a fine and strong tree”

Our school's approach to Attendance follows that of the Church of England Education Office, in that it seeks to be faith-sensitive and inclusive. It is under-pinned by Our Vision of “Achieving and Flourishing together in God's Loving Arms” and ensures that all of school life incorporates the values of the Christian Faith. These values are central to all that we do and determine how we will implement all policies and procedures. We want to ensure that through our gateways of Citizenship, Leadership, Expression, Exploration and Flourishing, all pupils and adults are shown how to be Compassionate, Forgiving, Determined and Honest individuals, who act with integrity and responsibility. By starting with our vision, we aim to ensure that all members of our school community understand our expectations, our practise and the ways in which we will implement policy.

Galmpton C of E Primary School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

1. Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
2. Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
3. Acting early to address patterns of absence
4. We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their child/ren of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 3. Legislation

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

The government expects:

- a. Schools and local authorities to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they

- are entitled; and,
  - Act early to address patterns of absence.
- b. Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- c. All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

#### **4. What you can expect from the School and governors:**

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where pupil's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support pupils to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support pupils returning to school after prolonged absence.
- We will report absence yearly via the annual school report, or more regularly if there are any concerns
- Governors will monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- Governors will hold headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

#### **5. What the School expects from pupils:**

- a. To attend regularly and on time.
- b. To be punctual.

#### **6. What the School expects from Parents/Carers:**

- a. To ensure their child attends the school on those days it is open, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- b. To ensure their child attends every day the school is open unless they are too ill to do so.

- c. To avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- d. To immediately inform the school if their child is unable to attend.
- e. To avoid making medical appointments during school time as far as possible.

## 7. Managing Attendance

### Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix C for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

If an attendance award system is used within a school, an attendance reward will take exceptions for 'authorised absence' into account, which are pupils whose absence marks relate to a recognised impairment (as the Equality Act 2010 requires us to treat those with a disability 'more favourably') or those pupils granted leave for religious observance or when you are absent for school trips or attending another educational setting or a necessary medical appointment.

## 8. Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving to school on time. If a child persistently arrives after the registers close, cases will be referred to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) for further investigation.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

## 9. Authorised Absences

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they

consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Absences from school will only be classified as authorised for the following reasons:

- a. Genuine illness
- b. Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- c. Days of religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- d. Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement or marriage of an immediate family member
- e. Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- f. External examinations
- g. Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- h. Attending other educational settings
- i. Exceptional circumstances authorised by the Headteacher

## **10. Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is requested for authorising these absences. Please contact the school office, as far in advance as possible, detailing date, time and appointment details contained within a medical letter (we will hold a copy on file).

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 9.

## **11. Absences during term time**

Permission must be sought in advance to take a pupil out of school during term time, which can only be requested from a parent/carer with parental responsibility and with whom the child normally lives.

If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child's

attendance being satisfactory up to the date covered by this request. If the school withdraws the authorisation due to the attendance dropping to an unacceptable level, the parent/carer will be informed of this in writing.

If a request is refused and the child is taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may then be liable to a penalty notice, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

## **12. Unplanned Absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see Appendix A for the school attendance management procedures).

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use (Please refer to Appendix C).

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

## **13. Truancy**

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be contacted by the school, who works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer if their child has been identified as truanting from the school. Persistent cases may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

## **14. Attendance Monitoring**

Attendance is monitored daily and weekly. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see Appendix A).

If a pupil has three bouts of illness within a term we will issue parents with a letter outlining the school's concerns around attendance. If the pupil's absence continues to rise the parents will be contacted to discuss the reasons for this and if there is no improvement, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

## 15. Strategies for promoting attendance

All our pupils are rewarded for good attendance and presentations are made during school assemblies to celebrate this.

## 16. When Attendance Causes Concern

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 may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

The school will utilise the support of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), where attendance is a concern. The EWO service can support and advise parent/carers who may be experiencing difficulties with their child's attendance.

If attendance continues to be unacceptable, the school, with support from the Educational Welfare Service, will instigate the fast track to prosecution process as per the flow chart in Appendix C

For continued unacceptable attendance the local authority may make the decision to issue a Penalty Notice. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

In certain circumstances, a parent/carer may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where they could face up to 3 months' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2,500. The parent/carer will be given every opportunity to improve their child's attendance and they will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

## 17. Links with other Policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy



## Appendix A – School Attendance Management Procedures



### Galmpton C of E Primary School Attendance Management Procedures

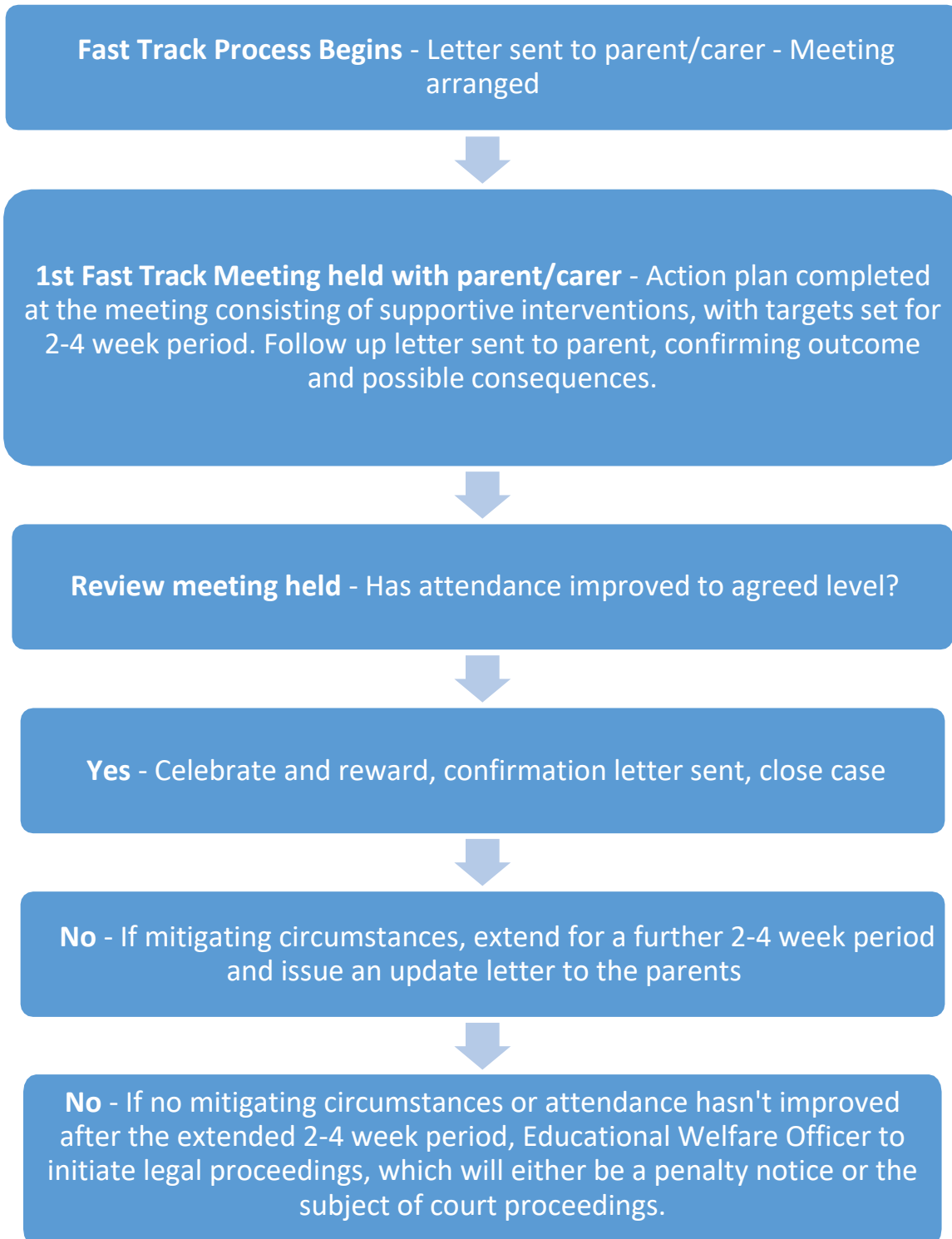
- a. Registration is between 8.45am and 8.55am. Pupils arriving after 8.55am but before 9.05am are deemed as late 'before registration closes'. Pupils arriving after 9.05am are considered late 'after registration has closed', they then lose their mark for the whole session and it is recorded as 'unauthorised'.
- b. If your child is ill, or absent from school for any reason, it is expected that parents/carers will ring in to the school office in the morning before 9.30am to inform the school of the reason for absence. If your child is unwell, please give details of the illness.
- c. The school has an answerphone and it is acceptable for a parent to leave a message. If no message has been received, the office staff will contact the parent
- d. Routine appointments i.e. dental check-ups, eye tests should be made out of school hours or during school holidays. For any appointments during the school day, please bring in your child's appointment card/letter; the office staff will take a copy and this is added to your child's school record.
- e. If the absence is for more than one day the school should be kept informed on a daily basis. If a pupil is absent due to illness for more than three days, the parent will be asked to provide an appointment card/prescription indicating that the pupil has been seen by a medical professional.

The reason for this is that when a pupil is quite unwell for sustained periods of time, we, as a school, are obliged to demonstrate that we have followed the absence process.

This is not about the school doubting what a parent has said, it ensures that when the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school to monitor pupil attendance below 95%, we can speak on behalf of the parent and explain the circumstances surrounding a pupil's low/erratic attendance or prolonged absences.

- f. Parents will be contacted on the first day of absence whenever any pupil is absent without reason, or persistently late, and will be reminded, if necessary, of their legal responsibility for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.
- g. The school has responsibility for following up any concerns for attendance, informing parents where there are concerns regarding attendance, and for reporting persistent problems to the designated senior leader.
- h. Warning letters will be sent home where a child's attendance drops below an acceptable standard and if not addressed this will lead to fast track prosecution.

## Appendix B – Fast Track to Prosecution Process



## Appendix C: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day