



# Attendance policy

Principal	Shereka James
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Ben Howe
Vice Principal (Behaviour)	Rachael Adediran
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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to academy attendance through our whole-academy culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with parents, carers and families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend academy

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn and our Behaviour for Learning policy supports this aim.

We want all Skinners' Academy pupils to achieve the very best outcomes and good attendance plays a significant role in achieving this.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 201](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the academy census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of academy attendance across the academy's policies and ethos
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the Academy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rachael Adediran, Vice Principal and can be contacted via email: [RAdediran@Skiddersacademy.org.uk](mailto:RAdediran@Skiddersacademy.org.uk)

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The academy attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal or Vice Principal (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Sumerah Hussein and can be contacted via email: [SHussein@Skiddersacademy.org.uk](mailto:SHussein@Skiddersacademy.org.uk) or Attendance @Skiddersacademy.org.uk

### **3.5 Personal Development Teachers**

Personal Development teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via SIMS or Edulink during morning (8.30am) and afternoon (2.55pm) Personal Development lessons.

### **3.6 Academy Administrative staff**

Academy Admin staff (the Attendance Officer in the first instance) will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system
- Transfer calls or refer follow up calls from parents and carers to the Pastoral Team (Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year, Pastoral Support Assistant, SLT Link, Vice Principal Key Stage) in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers

- Have a legal duty to make sure their child attends every day on time
- Are expected to call the Academy to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return or report via Edulink to the attendance officer.
- Are expected to provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Are expected to ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend academy every day by 8.25am in order to be on time for an 8.30am start time
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Sixth Form: Call the academy to report their absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in academy by 8.25am on each academy day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 8.50am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.55pm and will be kept open until 3.10pm

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the academy or reporting absence via Edulink (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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 academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment in writing or via Edulink.

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Pupils with persistent lateness are identified by the attendance officer each week. Written communications, telephone calls and parent/carer meetings are held by the Head of Year, attendance officer and or Education Welfare Officer depending on the level of persistence.
- Support plans are put in place and monitored on an ongoing basis.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend academy does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the academy will:

- Text and Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the academy may conduct a home visit, refer to the an education welfare officer or report the pupil as a Child Missing in Education to the local authority.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the Academy will consider involving the education welfare officer or doing safeguarding home visits

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels on a termly basis.

Parents can also view attendance percentage via the Edulink app and are reminded of this in Academy correspondence and parent information evenings.

The Academy analyses attendance data on a weekly basis. Parents are informed via meeting/calls/letters from Attendance officer/HOY/EWO as soon as concerns are identified.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. Parents should apply for leave of absence to the Principal in writing. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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 academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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 Academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision



- Study Leave

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

The Academy or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from academy, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 academy hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Attendance is celebrated daily in Personal Development and weekly in Assemblies with attendance awards given to pupils each term.

Parents are informed of excellent attendance and pupils receive certificates to highlight their progress.

Messaging of expectations takes place in assemblies and within the Personal Development Curriculum with the phrase 'Every Second Counts'.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the academy and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Pastoral teams and other Academy staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of academy, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of academy.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at academy
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance including in cases of emotional based school avoidance
- Involve the Safeguarding Team and wider professionals including Pastoral teams, SENDCo and other support staff within the Academy and external services, in discussions and planning for pupils regarding attendance
- Work with external agencies to support pupil attendance

The Attendance officer may also write to parents, refer to HOY for involvement or the EWO. The EWO may send a Penalty Notice and refer to Hackney Education court officer to start court proceedings.

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Rachael Adediran, Vice Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on academy 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 academy
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 academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the academy
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	Academy has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy
<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	Academy is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at academy after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in academy	Pupil of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy 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 academy
<b>#</b>	Planned academy closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day