



**Robert
Wilkinson**

PRIMARY ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

Signed: _____

Date of Signature: _____

Dated: October 2016

Review Date: October 2017

Ebor Academy Alliance Attendance Policy

Introduction

In order for all children to achieve their full potential they must be in school every day, on time and ready to learn. The Ebor Academy Alliance places a high value on punctual and regular attendance. Every child and family in the academies will be made aware of the importance of this through regular updates, the positive promotion of good attendance, rewards for good attendance and, where necessary, discussions with families about the need to improve attendance and punctuality. We wish to foster good attendance and punctuality habits from the early years and throughout the child's school career and into adult life.

Responsibilities

Improving the attendance and therefore life chances of the children in the schools in the Alliance, is the responsibility of parents/carers, the Alliance, its schools and the child. Working together in partnership will ensure each child is most likely to achieve their full potential by ensuring their frequent and punctual attendance.

This policy reflects the expected practice in all schools within the Ebor Academy Alliance. The fair and consistent application of the policy is the responsibility of all staff.

Each Ebor Academy Alliance school will take the attendance register twice a day: at the start of each morning and once during the afternoon. The Academies will also notify the local authority if a pupil has irregular attendance or is absent continuously without authorisation.

Aims of the policy to promote good attendance

Explicit in the overall aim of the school is the principle that children should feel secure and happy in a well ordered environment and that they should be enthusiastic about coming to school. Children have a right to experience a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum; non attendance deprives them of this opportunity.

It is the aim of this policy that unauthorised absence should be 0% on a year by year basis and that authorised absences should be kept to a minimum. Whole school and individual monitoring will be in line with targets set by the Ebor Academy Alliance on an annual basis.

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils in the schools we will:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the schools in the Alliance
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Implement a common systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Implement a common system of rewards for attendance
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and carers
- Ensure we have positive and consistent methods of communication about attendance matters with families and the schools in the Alliance
- Work in partnership with supporting services and agencies and the Local Authority
- Recognise and meet the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

Persistent Absence

Guidance from the Department for Education (2015) advises that if a child's attendance is below 90% he/she will be referred to as 'Persistent Absence'. Schools in the Ebor Academy Alliance will work closely with parents and carers, the local authority and other external agencies to improve persistent absenteeism. This may include the use of parenting contracts and Attendance Panels.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

There are a series of codes defined by the Department of Education which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the correct codes are recorded and that patterns in children's attendance is analysed.

Parents and carers should be made aware that it is for the Executive Headteacher and/or Head of School of each academy to decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. All reasons given for a child's absence are considered by the academy. As examples, absence from school **may** be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- genuine illness
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Absence from school will **not** be authorised for:

- shopping
- birthdays
- minding the house
- caring for brothers/sisters/relatives
- parent/carer illness
- sibling illness
- arrivals after a specific time in the morning – please see the guidance below for each academy

The Executive Headteacher and/or Head of School Head teachers will only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be treated on an individual basis. Advice on what constitutes exceptional circumstances suggests situations such as children of service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside the term time, or families who need to spend time together following a crisis. Parents and carers are asked to ensure that they make any medical appointments for their child outside of the school day.

If the Executive Headteacher and/or Head of School grants a leave request, it will be for him or her to determine the length of time that any child can be away from school. As a norm, leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents and carers should put in writing all request for a child's absence from school for any purpose. This should be sent to the school marked well in advance of any request for leave of absence during term time. Circumstances such as previous attendance, academic achievement, family circumstances and the time of year, will be taken into account. If your child has an older sibling, contact will also be made with local secondary schools so that a joint decision can be made. Should a leave of absence request not be authorised and your child is still taken out of school, a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' could be issued.

Fixed Penalty Notice

In certain circumstances parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice where they take a holiday in term time which is not authorised by the Executive Headteacher and/or Head of School. A Fixed Penalty Notice can require a parent to pay a sum of either £60 or £120. Each parent can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents with two children can potentially be issued with four notices.

Support and guidance available to those with poor attendance and punctuality

Where persistent absence occurs, or where persistent lateness or poor attendance is identified through monitoring processes, the appropriate member of staff in each academy will contact the family. They will offer support and assistance to families who are experiencing difficulties in getting their children to school. This will be via, appointments in school, guidance and advice on attendance or contact with other agencies. In some cases, families will be offered a Parenting Contract for attendance, Common Assessment or CAF assessment in order to fully support the family concerned. In more severe cases, such as 'Persistent Absence', staff will contact the Local Authority's Front Door Service. Together they will work with the family to offer further support and guidance. If attendance continues to be poor at this point steps may be taken, as dictated by law, which may result in prosecution for non-attendance.

The Ebor Academy Alliance has a duty to refer regular absence (authorised and unauthorised) to the relevant local authority. This may include any evidence to show how schools in the Alliance have supported the pupil and parent to improve attendance. It is for each local authority to judge each referral on its own merits and make a decision on the next probable cause of action.

Further information for parents and carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to read the guidance on authorised and unauthorised absence and information on Fixed Penalty Notices in the document 'School Attendance Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice August 2013' Reference: DFE-00158-2013 via the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk

School Specific Guidance - Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy

Start of the school day:

The school day at Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy begins with a morning whistle at 8.50. All children are encouraged to be on time for the whistle as morning work routines begin once the children enter the classroom.

Late arrivals:

Children arriving after 9am should report to the main school office and will be recorded as arriving late (L) Arrivals after 9.20 am will be marked as (U) on the register

Reporting an expected absence i.e medical reasons:

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school office as soon as they are aware of the reason for the absence, or in writing stating the reason and period of time that the child will be absent from school. If a child is taken out of school for an appointment, parents/carers must sign them out at the main school office.

Reporting an unexpected absence i.e. illness:

Parents/carers are asked to telephone or contact the school office as soon as possible to confirm the reason why and how long their child will be absent from school if known.

Children who are 'Missing in Education'

Any child who does not take up their place within mainstream education, or who is repeatedly marked as absent without reason, the school will refer to the safeguarding policy for further information and/or contact the Front Door Service for further information

First Day Contact:

A phone call home will be made for any child who is not in school by 9.30am and where a reason has not been given, or a phone message not received. There will be no exceptions to this process. If the school are unable to contact the parent they will continue to ring each day until contact is made. If a child is absent without reason for a week the school will review if there is a need to inform any agencies or request a community police welfare visit.

Where the school has concerns around a pupil's attendance it may intervene in one or more of the following ways:

The senior leadership team and the Local Authority Attendance Adviser will review the attendance of all the schools pupils on a half termly basis and any pupils identified as a cause for concern or less than 90% attendance on a more regular basis. A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if there appears to be no improvement, the parent the of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the Executive Headteacher/Head of School to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending. If the parent/s does not attend the meeting or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve a formal referral to the Local Authority Attendance Adviser will be made.

- Half term attendance figures published admin office class and these to be examined at a staff meeting so individual cases can be discussed – reinforcement of 95% school target essential.

- Students below 90% attendance or punctuality in any half term to receive a standard letter of concern from the Executive Headteacher/ Head of School. The letter is generated by the admin team.
- Students below 90% attendance / punctuality for a second half term within a year to receive a second warning letter.
- Students who are below 90% attendance will receive a third letter inviting the parents in to a meeting with the Principal / Head of School
- Students who continue to have below 90% attendance / punctuality within a year will be asked to attend an Attendance panel within school to set targets for improvement. This attendance panel is attended by the parent(s), Local Authority Attendance Adviser, member of the leadership team, office manager and is an important step in the Local Authority's response to poor attendance.
- Students who are below 90% more than three half terms in a year will be subject to intensive contact from the school through designated senior leadership team member. Possible outcomes are further attendance panel hearings or a fixed term penalty from the school or Local Authority.
- Students will receive an Annual Attendance letter and all new students to the school will receive a copy of the letter in their new starter packs.