

SAET - Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. Aims

The Severn Academies Educational Trust (SAET) is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at SAET, it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all students. SAET actively promotes good attendance and discourages unjustified absence. SAET recognises that promoting good attendance and punctuality prepares students for the disciplines of adult working life.

2. Guiding Principles

- Each Academy emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the Academy to improve attendance and punctuality.
- SAET needs to ensure that all its students access a full-time education, which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- Each Academy will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Each Academy will work with students and their families to ensure every student has good attendance and punctuality.
- Each Academy will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Each Academy has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- Each Academy will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.
- Each Academy will support all aspects of the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2003: 'Every Child Matters' by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- Each Academy will have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

3. What you can expect from the Severn Academies Educational Trust (SAET):

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence
- We will work closely with parents/carers where student's absence is cause for concern
- We will support students to achieve good attendance and punctuality
- We will support students returning to school after prolonged absence

4. What the Severn Academies Educational Trust expects from Students:

- To attend regularly and on time
- To be punctual to all lessons
- To ensure that they register for all sessions/timetabled lessons and inform the Attendance Office (Academy / Reception) where appropriate if they are not able to be registered
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are given to the appropriate person or taken to the appropriate place (as determined by each individual academy).

5. What Severn Academies Educational Trust expects from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends the Academy on those days it is open, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the Academy is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the Academy for any reason other than illness or other authorised reason.
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- To immediately inform the Academy Attendance Office / Academy if their child is unable to attend including the reason for absence and expected date of return. In all academies except parents should also confirm in writing on their child's return the reason for their absence.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the Academy on each day of absence.

6. Registration

- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day - at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session.
- Students are expected to arrive early am in order to be ready for the start of the first lesson.
- Students are registered at the start of every lesson of the day.
- Registers close at in the morning (usually 9.00 am but contact the specific academy or see the Academy website for more details) and in the afternoon (contact the specific academy or see the Academy website for more details) after which students will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1).
- Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'Advice on School Attendance' published 2012 by the DfE.

7. Punctuality

- Each Academy expects students to arrive punctually (contact the specific academy or see the Academy website for more details) and students arriving after this time are deemed to be late.
- Any student arriving after this time should sign in at Student Reception or Academy Reception giving their reason for being late. Where appropriate the student's planner will be stamped/or late slip given.
- Students without a satisfactory explanation may be given a sanction/detention (contact the specific academy or see the Academy website for more details).
- Students arriving at first lesson without a stamp in their planner/or late slip should be directed back to Student Reception or Academy Reception to sign in.
- Repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers.

8. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the Academy has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the Academy can do this.

- Parents/carers should contact the Academy Attendance Office (by telephone or email) on the morning of absence (before 9.00 in the case of most Academy's), giving a reason and an expected date of return. This should be followed up by a note on the child's return.
- Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:
 - illness
 - unavoidable medical/dental appointments
 - exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
 - days of religious observance (see Appendix 2)
 - study leave
 - exclusion
 - involvement in a public performance
- Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:
 - looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
 - birthdays
 - days out, e.g. The Three Counties Show
 - shopping trips
 - family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not normally be approved).
 - special occasions, where the Academy does not agree that the absence should be granted.
- Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, students should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment. Confirmation of all appointments by way of appointment card, letter or appointment slip must be provided for any absence to be authorised. The Academy requires sight of an appointment card or letter in order to authorise any absence from the Academy. If medical appointments are attended at the start of the day, causing the student to arrive late to the academy, medical evidence (as above) must be provided or a sanction/detention may be issued (contact the specific academy or see the Academy website for more details).
- Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a student's absence, the Academy will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.
- Absence which hasn't been explained will remain as unauthorised.
- Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for holidays, days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

9. How we respond to Absence/Lateness

- If a student is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the Academy may contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence. Contact will usually be via automated message (where available) which will attempt to call/text landline numbers and mobile numbers for priority 1 and 2 contact numbers. Parents/carers are able to respond directly upon receiving this call. Alternatively, where a message has been left by the automated service, a parent should contact the Attendance Office / Reception to inform us of the reason for their child's absence. The academy asks that parents/carers ensure that their respective academy has the most up to contact details at all times.
- If no response is received to the automated service, the Academy will contact (phone or letter) to parents/carers requesting an explanation.
- All absence notes will be retained.
- Where a student's absence is cause for concern, the Academy will write to parents/carers and/or invite the parents/carers into school or visit parents/carers at home
- Where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite intervention, the Fast Track to Attendance process will be followed (Appendix 3). Penalty notices may be issued in line with each relevant Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

10. Persistent Absence

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. This threshold was changed by the Department for Education from September 2015 and was 15% previously. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any student whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- an action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve a CAF and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant Academy staff and parents/carers
- where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the Academy further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

11. Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any absence interrupts the continuity of student's learning. Government Legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence, please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take students out of school for holidays during term time.

Even where the circumstances are considered exceptional, please be aware that:

- Your request will not be authorised during exam periods (these could be throughout the year)
- Your request will not be authorised during the month of September
- Your request will not be authorised for any student in Year 11
- Your request will not be authorised if your child's attendance is below the respective academy's attendance target for the 12 months prior to application
- Your request will not be authorised if your child has unauthorised absences
- Your request will not be authorised where a previous holiday has been taken.
- Your request will not be authorised where there are coursework deadlines or controlled assessments (these could be throughout the year)

It is expected that a Request Form is submitted to the Student Information Desk at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the request form.

The Academy has the right to serve a Penalty Notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation. Penalties require each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days (with effect from September 2013). Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any student taking leave of absence without prior notification to the Academy.

12. Re-integration following Long-term Absence

Where a student has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, the Academy will:

- welcome the student back to the Academy and value their return
- provide support for the student in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the Academy
- ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances
- work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome
- consider a personalised programme of return if appropriate
- monitor and review the student's return

13. Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- It is the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all students
- Students are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve
- Where appropriate, students whose attendance falls below the appropriate target for each academy will be set a target for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed

- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded
- Students, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Academy Attendance Office /Reception at any time to discuss their child's attendance
- Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Students who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the Academy
- Effective links are made with primary schools to facilitate the smooth transition to SAET secondary academies
- Students' attendance will be reported

14. Attendance Data and Targets

- Each academy will set its own attendance target, please refer to each individual academy for the appropriate figure
- The target for all students is to strive for 100% attendance. Only by achieving full attendance can students expect to achieve their full potential
- Attendance data will be collected and analysed and used to inform the Academy's attendance practices and interventions
- Individual student data will be analysed and monitored to enable early intervention
- Attendance data is provided on a termly basis to the Local Governing Body
- Attendance data and persistent absence data is communicated to the Local Authority and is published via the DfE RaiseOnline
- Each academy will monitor attendance on a weekly basis

15. Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

- Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education
- Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.
- The Academy works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison
- All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence

16. Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of the Academy have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

Subject teachers

- Welcome and value the attendance of all students to lessons
- Will ensure all students are accurately registered
- Will ensure that students know the register is being taken
- Will identify student absence to lessons and take appropriate action
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff

Class teachers / tutors

- Will discuss absence and attendance weekly with students
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff
- Will work with identified students, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets
- Will ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are sent to the appropriate Academy Attendance Office / Reception

Directors of Learning / Heads of Year

- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly
- Will discuss absence and attendance concerns with students and set targets for improvement.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified
- Will support students to improve their attendance
- Will promote attendance through assemblies
- Will work with other members of staff to share information and support students and their parents/carers to improve attendance

Attendance Office Staff / Reception

- Will monitor registration on a daily basis
- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding student absence
- Will contact parents/carers regarding student absence
- Will regularly update Directors of Learning / Heads of Year
- Will identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff
- Will discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff

Director of Attendance and Student Welfare / Senior Attendance Officer / Attendance Manager

- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the Academy, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence
- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate members of staff

- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance.
- Will support students to improve their attendance
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual students
- Will provide data to the Principal/Headteacher/CEO on a regular basis

The Principal/Headteacher and Senior Leaders

- Will ensure that the Academy attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed
- Will ensure the whole Academy ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality
- Report to the Local Academy Council on attendance
- Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience
- Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning

Appendix 1

DfE ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS (adopted September 2006, and amended Feb 2013 and Sept 2015)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES
/	Present (AM)	Present	
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Off-site Educational Activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	
G	Family holiday (NOT authorised by the school or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	
H	Family holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence	
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	
P	Approved supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence	
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Enforced Closure)	Not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not yet on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances	
#	Planned whole or partial school	Not counted in possible	

Religious Observance

Authorised absence may be granted for religious observance, for example, Eid. The Department for Education definition is as follows:

“Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.”

If the religious body has not set the day apart, there is no requirement for the Academy to approve the absence or grant leave of absence.

Individual religions and their religious observance are too numerous to detail in this document.

Parents should contact the Academy to request leave of absence for all religious observance.

APPENDIX 3 – Fast Track to Attendance Academy Flow Chart

The following process outlines how the Fast Track process should be followed and what meetings/letters should be used at each stage.

