



## Attendance & Progress Policy

The Trust is committed to maintaining an overall attendance of 95% or above in line with OfSTED guidelines. Regular attendance at school is at the heart of the Every Child Matters agenda and the drive to raise attainment.

David Ross Education Trust endorses the following government statements:

- A student who is absent for ten days during one whole academic year will attain only 94.7% attendance
- There is a strong link between the amount of absence and the results/qualifications that a student achieves
- Every lesson matters - children who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well at school

Research suggests that just seventeen days missed from school equates to a GCSE grade.

### Attendance Procedures

#### Responsibilities

##### **Administrator/Inclusion Support/Home School Liaison:**

Carry out first day calling.

Track persistent absentees.

Build relationships with parents and provide encouragement and support.

##### **Class Teacher:**

Complete registers accurately and on time.

Follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents.

Challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.

Record all reasons for absence in the register.

Log all meetings with parents.

Inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.

##### **Local Governing Body:**

Represent CRA at Trust Attendance panels, parents evenings etc

Request regular attendance progress reports for LGB meetings.

##### **Parents:**

Make contact with the academy on first day of absence or as soon as possible.

Provide signed and dated absence notes for all absences.

Support their child and the Trust in achieving maximum attendance.

##### **Office Staff:**

Administrative staff can play a vital role in supporting the academy's attendance and absence management strategies if they:

Produce reports from weekly registers.

Log reasons for absence on management system.

Maintain a late log.

### **The Importance of Registration**

An attendance register, electronic or manual, must be kept on which, at the BEGINNING of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.

Manual registers must be kept in ink and corrections must be made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable.

Where electronic registers are used, hard copies, current for each session, must be kept to observe the spirit of the law and for Health and Safety reasons.

Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall attendance and absence figures. Attendance registers, and bound copies of electronic registration print outs must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

### **Lateness**

Academies should actively discourage late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.

At Charles Read Academy registers remain open for thirty minutes from the beginning of registration. In the event of bad weather this period can be extended. Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present. Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they should be marked with an unauthorised absence in red and the letter L in blue or black to indicate that they are on site.

### **Categorising Absence:**

Only the academy, in the context of the law, can authorise absence; a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Principal.

Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Principal.

Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.

Class teachers/tutors who experience difficulty in receiving a parental note should inform the Principal.

### **Authorised**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities.

Authorised absence is where the academy has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (only permissible in exceptional circumstances) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.



The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available
- Days of religious observance
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated

### Unauthorised Absence

#### Holidays

Due to recent changes in Government guidelines, academies will no longer be able to authorise holidays in term time as of September 2013.

If holiday is taken in term time, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and it may result in a Fixed Penalty Charge Notice, under section 44 of the Education Act 1996. This will result in a fine. The fine has increased to £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 28 days. If a penalty notice is not paid, there may be a prosecution in court. (See full details in [Appendix 1](#) Holidays in Term Time)

#### Other

Absences should not be authorised for the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips
- Minding the house or looking after siblings
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified
- No reason given
- Absence from work experience without explanation
- Staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from the academy. It is for the Principal to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

#### Liaising with External Agencies

Research has shown that schools, in partnership with the full range of support services, have a greater impact on attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the Academy and the Trust. It is, therefore, vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.



Other agencies that can be used where appropriate in individual cases:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services
- Educational Psychologists
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Social Services
- Connexions Youth Service
- Local Police

### **Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date**

Charles Read Academy will ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date' .

### **Reporting of Attendance**

A report of attendance will be sent out once a year. This will state the total number of sessions possible and how many have been attended, the number of absences and the reasons for the absences and the number of late arrivals, together with details of any unauthorised absence.

### **Accountability**

Academy Principals hold delegated responsibility for discharging the sound application of all Trust policies.

In accordance with the Trust's terms of reference, the Chief Executive Officer has delegated responsibility for direct line management of Academy Principals and day to day oversight of the Local Governing Body of each Academy.

Therefore, should the subject of the application of this policy be the Academy Principal, the CEO will be responsible for discharging the relevant policy.

Academy Principals should inform the CEO of all matters relating to serious breaches of this policy including any major incident to be addressed under this code of conduct promptly, preferably prior to action being taken insofar as is reasonably practicable.

### **Policy Status**

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

The Trust may alter or adapt this policy, and any components of it, at any time provided it notifies the Chairs of the Local Governing Bodies.



## Appendix 1 : Holidays in Term Time

There are 190 statutory school days a year; so there are 175 other days (weekends and school holidays) available for holidays which would not have a negative effect on a child's education.

For this reason, and in line with new regulations coming into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, **no leave of absence will be authorised in term time** except in very exceptional circumstances.

### What the Law says

Amendments to the 2006 regulations mean that the Head teacher/Principal no longer has the discretion to allow absence for a family holiday or extended leave and the previous statutory threshold of ten school days has been removed. The amendments make clear that Head teachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers/Principals should determine the number of days a child can be away from the academy if the leave is granted. A copy of Department for Education's guidance can be found:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

### Procedure

Following an application for a term time leave of absence, the Head teacher/Principal or member of the senior leadership team should initiate a discussion with parents/carers in order to accurately assess the request and outline the wider implications. This can also include the academy's named governor for attendance.

If a leave of absence is taken without the academy's permission or if a child fails to return by the agreed date, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted on the child's records. If a child has not returned within 10 days of the expected date of return, then the academy may take the child off roll, after consultation with the named Education Welfare Officer.

If a pupil's attendance continues to be an issue, having taken a leave of absence during term time, the academy can consider a variety of initiatives, one of which may be a fixed penalty notice. The penalty notice fine has increased to £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 28 days. If a penalty notice is not paid, there may be a prosecution in court.



## Appendix 2

### GOOD PRACTICE

Research suggests that good practice is associated with:

- A senior teacher being charged with specific responsibility for pupil attendance:  
*Charles Read Academy – Vice Principal*
- A list of absentees being produced quickly, ideally by morning break, for use by appropriate teaching and office staff.
- The academy devising a sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of absentees - e.g. either by telephoning home or sending out letters to parents or guardians.
- Class Teachers ensuring that records of attendance are as accurate as possible and explanations for absence are produced when pupils return to the academy.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team monitoring the attendance records of pupils.
- Regular spot-checks for specific lesson truancy, and for students leaving the academy before the end of the day, being enacted at intervals.
- Rewards introduced for individual pupils or classes with an excellent attendance record in the form of praise or prizes.
- Penalties being introduced for pupils who are persistently late.
- Absentees and truants being quietly welcomed back to the academy upon their return and efforts made to reintegrate them socially and academically.
- First day of absence contact. This is a phone call to the homes of all, or a targeted group of absentees on their first day of absence. This has proved to be effective in addressing casual and opportunistic absence. Even short-term use of the strategy often produces long-term benefits.
- Targeting identified pupils or groups of pupils with unsatisfactory levels of attendance can have significant benefits.