

THE PREMIER ACADEMY



ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY – SEPTEMBER 2025

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. The Premier Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time and therefore have access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

This Policy is made available to all parents/carers via the Academy website.

This Policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE (2024) Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2025) Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE (2024) Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

This Policy operates in conjunction with the following Academy policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Records Management Policy

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the CEO and Governors at the Academy work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children and families are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this Policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims And Objectives

This Policy ensures that all staff and governors in the Academy are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve children's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues or on an agreed part-time timetable.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the Academy.
- Raise awareness of parents/carers and children of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy promotes good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with children, parents/carers, staff and the Local Authority so that all children realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and children.
- Ensuring that parents/carers understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, children, staff and governors on attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting children and parents/carers who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, the Academy defines:

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the Academy has received notification from a parent or carer. Only the Academy can authorise an absence. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.

Categories of authorised absence:

- An absence of sickness for which the Academy has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the Academy has granted leave, however it is expected that parents/carers will aim for appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave. Defined on page 86 of the DfE's Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024 guidance as: a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the family belongs.
- A day's absence due to a family emergency.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the leave being granted by the Academy.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason as outlined above, even with the support of a parent/carer.

Persistent Absenteeism

Missing 10% or more schooling across the year **for any reason** (including authorised absence).

Responsibilities

All members of academy staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- Informing the Attendance Officer/HELPAS Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation if a parent/carer is seen, which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of attendance
- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Academy's Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- Liaising with other professionals to secure necessary identified support for parents/carers and children
- Making referrals to the Local Authority

Administration Staff

Staff in the Academy Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no reason has been provided
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Attendance Officer/HELPAS Team

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends the Academy on every day required, and on time unless prevented from doing so by the child's illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the Academy office on the first morning of absence
- Informing the Academy in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we require evidence from the doctor, dentist or hospital (appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time and only if the absence is absolutely necessary
- Where absence has been authorised for an 'Exceptional Circumstance,' parents/carers are responsible for returning their child to school on the agreed date, and should absence be extended, parents/carers should provide proof of the reason for the extension
- Talking to the Academy as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with

Registration

The Academy opens to all at 8.30am and registration is taken at 8:45am. This time is sufficient for all children to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any child who is absent must be recorded as such at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 8:45am and at the start of their afternoon session. These registers are then returned to the Academy office.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software and linked directly to the Department for Education.

Attendance registers are legal documents, and these are kept secure and preserved for a period of six years via our MIS after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the gates are closed at 8.45am the only entrance into the Academy is via the Atrium. Any child who comes into school this way from 8.45am must be accompanied by a parent/carer and the reason for the lateness given, and the child will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those children who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each child. Any child who arrives later than 9.10am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning.

Children who have attended a dentist, doctor or hospital appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.10am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidences of lateness parents/carers will receive written communication advising them of the concerns and the Academy will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The CEO has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

First Day Contact

Where we have not received a reason for a child's absence, we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all the registers from 8:45am-9:00am on a daily basis, to identify those children who are absent. When we are unaware as to the reason for a child's absence, we contact the parent/carer by phone. If we are unable to make contact, a call will be made to each contact in turn to request a reason for the absence. If no contact can be made, a text will be sent to the parent/carer. If after 5 days, no reason has been forthcoming, the absence will be changed from an N code (no reason given) to an unauthorised absence (attendance code O).

All absence, whether explained or otherwise, is checked against the children of concern list and follow-up actions taken immediately, as required.

Illness

When children have an illness which means that they will be away from school for an extended period of time, the Academy will send material home so that they can keep up with their schoolwork. If appropriate the Academy will contact external support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition.

Where over the course of an academic year a child has repeated periods of illness, the Academy will write to parents/carers to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. Where a need for further support is identified, other professionals/services will be engaged.

Parental Request for Absence from School

Schools can only grant leave of absence if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.

All leave of absence must be requested in advance. No absence for holidays will be authorised, and any unauthorised attendance could lead to the next stage of the process, an immediate fine or the removal from roll if the absence is more than 20 days.

Procedures

The Academy will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.

- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and children.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the Academy.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage and not authorise unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Work with parents/carers to improve individual children's attendance and punctuality.
- Refer to the Local Authority any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Report attendance statistics to Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- All staff are aware that they must promote attendance or punctuality concerns to the Attendance Officer/ HELPAS Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Persistent Absence Procedures

First Day Contact procedures and follow-up actions are key for those children identified as persistently absent.

If absence concerns are identified, an email is sent informing parents/carers of the current status of their child's attendance, the requirement for improvement and support offered.

If there is no immediate improvement, a request for a face-to-face meeting will be made and external support and/or a school attendance contract may be initiated.

If parents/carers do not respond to the request for a face-to-face meeting and there is no improvement in attendance, then a home visit will be arranged by the Academy.

If none of the above are complied with, then a referral to the Local Authority will be considered for more formal routes to be taken as outlined below.

In these instances, the Academy reserves the right to withdraw any non-statutory provision which may be routinely offered outside the statutory schooling hours of 8.45am – 3.15pm. This provision includes but is not limited to Breakfast Club, After School Club, Extra Curriculum Clubs, Residential visits and Sporting Events.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The Academy aims for attendance of at least 96%.

The Local Authority will issue penalty notices to parents/carers where a referral has been made from the Academy as part of the Academy's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or Local Authority to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the Local Authority for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Monitoring and Review

The next scheduled review date for this Policy is September 2026.

Any changes made to this Policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.