



## **BEACON ACADEMY**

### **Attendance Policy**

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<b>Updated</b>	<b>September 2019</b>
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<b>Date of Review:</b>	<b>Summer Term 2021</b>
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	<b>Safeguarding Lead</b>

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## Introduction

The Governors have requested that a comprehensive policy to support and maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality of pupils within the Academy, be made available. This policy deals with the legal framework relevant to attendance and punctuality, the responsibilities of different groups and the procedures to follow with regard to the administration of attendance and punctuality strategies within the Academy.

In doing so, this provides good communication with Governors, in order for them to encourage and challenge attendance and punctuality levels.

Regular school attendance is of the utmost importance. **We will strive, at all times, to achieve a minimum of 95% school attendance.** Students need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in students being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. If children do not arrive in school they cannot be educated - a good attendance is an essential component of school life. Furthermore, good attendance promotes reliability and punctuality, both attributes for a successful working life after school.

### The Partnership between Parents and School

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. **Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in the correct condition to learn.** Parents of registered students of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to send their children to school regularly, and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty.

At Beacon Academy we expect parents to see themselves as partners with the school in the education of their child. Along with the pastoral staff, parents must ensure that their children maintain an excellent attendance record. They must make sure that they inform the school promptly if there is cause for an authorised absence. Please make medical and dental appointments outside Academy hours. If this is not possible parents are asked to provide evidence of appointments and ensure their child attends the Academy the rest of the day. Without evidence it may not be possible to authorise absence.

The links between attendance and achievement are strong. Three quarters of the students with over 95% attendance achieve five grade 9 - 4 GCSEs including English and Mathematics. However, only one third of students who miss between 5 and 10% of their education manage to achieve five A\* to C GCSEs including English and Mathematics.

### Legal Framework

Under Section 7 of the education Act 1996, parent/carers are responsible for making sure that children of compulsory age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Attendance registers are maintained in accordance with Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006. The register is backed up monthly and a printed version is available. There is provision for registers to be stored for at least 3 years.

## **The promotion of good attendance**

Beacon Academy employs several strategies to create a hardworking and happy atmosphere in the school which encourages and positively promotes good attendance:

### **\*Awards for Good Attendance**

Weekly awards are presented to the Tutor Group with the highest attendance. – Criteria for rewards activities also includes attendance.

### **\* Ethos of the School**

Beacon Academy places great importance on the right of each student to develop uniquely in an atmosphere of complete safety. The pastoral team strive to ensure that students enjoy their time at school and wish to attend regularly.

### **\* Anti-Bullying Programme**

An Awareness Week is run each year with new students signing an Anti-Bullying Code. Students discuss bullying and its effects in lessons. A confidential post box is placed at the main office and monitored throughout the day.

### **\* Good Communication with Parents**

Parents are made aware of the attendance requirements in the student school planner and on the Induction Evening. If there is any cause for concern regarding their child's attendance, parents will be aware that they can contact the Attendance Officer (AO), Designated Lead for Safeguarding (DLS) or the Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator at any time concerning the wellbeing of their child. Letters home reinforce this.

### **\* Form Tutor Checks**

Form Tutors are very diligent in checking the arrival or non-arrival of their students and if there is cause for concern they will inform the Academy DLS/Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator.

### **\* Computerised Registration**

This provides the AO and DLS with immediate access to each student's attendance record.

## **Processes and procedures**

### **Registration**

Support for attendance is achieved through our pastoral, academic and administration teams and systems. The academy day consists of two sessions; each session is given an attendance code following registration.

**AM registration takes place during period 1: 08:30 – 09:30 (Registers close at 08:45)**

**PM registration is a tutor group period between 12:50 – 13:50**

If a student arrives late to registration after 08:30 am but before 08:45 the class teacher will record the arrival as Late (code L).

Students arriving after 08:45 will report to the attendance office to sign in and receive their mark.

### **School Procedure for Dealing with Absenteeism**

Parents must inform the school by 9.00 am on the first day of a student absence. If no message is received, the AO will contact the parents by **telephone / text**. First day response text message and phone calls are made by the Academy if no contact is made by parents/carers. The AO may make a home visit on the first day of absence and may visit daily for periods of unexplained absence.

If absence continues to give pastoral staff cause for concern, the academy will engage the Education Welfare Service to make a **home visit** and, if attendance problems persist (i.e. below 95% attendance), the AO will convene a formal Academy Attendance Panel meeting, leading to the setting of agreed attendance targets and close monitoring of attendance over a 4 week period. The DLS and/or AO will recommend to the Headteacher if court action is necessary.

## **Punctuality/Lateness**

Poor punctuality is never acceptable. Failure to attend any period one at the start of the Academy day means that your child misses important learning and progress. Class registers are taken in every lesson throughout the Academy day. Arriving late for any lesson means that the student misses the introduction to the work of the lesson, disrupting their own and others' learning and the teacher's teaching. Afternoon registration is taken at the start of tutor period, so arriving late means that the student may have a late mark or an unauthorised absence.

## **How we manage punctuality/lateness**

Period 1 starts at 08:30 this is when students should be in Academy and attending their lessons. After 08:30 any late arrival is registered as Late (code L), which counts as a present mark. If a student arrives after the register closes their absence is coded N. Afternoon registration is in a tutor period between 12.50 and 13.50; a student who arrives late to the registration is coded L.

If a student has a persistent lateness record, parents will be asked to meet with the AO or DLS to resolve the problem, but parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to Academy on time.

## **Lesson Truancy**

Registers are taken in every lesson and when it is established that a student is not in a lesson, the pastoral staff are alerted and attempts are made to locate and return the student to the lesson. Failure to locate a student will result in a telephone call/text message to parents/carers, in line with current safeguarding procedure.

## **Internal truancy**

Senior and pastoral staff carry out 'learning walks' throughout lessons and will return a student to their lesson. Teaching staff follow the appropriate sanctions, including informing parents, ensuring missed work is made up and issuing an appropriate sanction. The teaching staff involved should investigate the reasons for internal truancy and address the matter appropriately.

## **Students leaving the premises**

Students are not allowed to leave the premises without staff permission at any time between 08:30 and the end of the Academy day at 14:50. If a student has a hospital, medical or dental appointment during Academy hours, parents should ensure that the AO and/or DLS are made

aware in advance and that an appointment card or letter is shown to the AO, prior to them leaving. For safeguarding reasons, the student must sign out and sign back in on their return.

**NO student shall be sent home unless an adult with parental responsibility collects the student. If the adult is unable to collect the student, following prior agreement with parents/carers, designated academy staff will take the student to the home address and where the parent/carer is ready to receive the student into their care.**

*On no account must a student be allowed to leave the school premises unless it is with authorisation from a parent or carer with PR. Parent/Carers are required to collect students from the academy and/or give permission for dedicated staff to transport students home. **Under no circumstances will students be allowed to leave the premises unaccompanied (in line with current safeguarding legislation/guidelines).***

*Suspicious telephone calls can be checked by telephoning the student's home or emergency contact number. The DLS and/or Deputy Child Protector Co-ordinator should be consulted at all times.*

If it is established that a student has left the site without permission the parent is informed by text or telephone. The Academy will notify the police. Parents are required to attempt to make contact with their child and return them to the Academy. Teaching staff follow the appropriate sanctions, ensuring missed work is made up and issuing an appropriate sanction. If there is repeated post registration truancy, parents and student will be invited to discuss the issues surrounding attendance and punctuality within the appropriate Pastoral Structure (i.e. form tutor, AO, DLS/Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator).

## **Leave of Absence**

No parent/carer has a right to withdraw a student from the Academy during term time. Permission for Leave of Absence will only be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. If parents wish to apply for leave of absence during term time, a *Parental Request Form for Leave of Absence*, stating the exceptional reasons for the request, must be submitted two weeks in advance to the Headteacher by a parent with whom the child normally resides. Leave of Absence (LOA) will **not** be granted during any period used for school examinations, nor during any year in which a student takes public examinations until after the examination commitments of the student are completed. Parents/carers should note that any LOA request within Academy term time, will be unauthorised. Further legal action is at the discretion of the Headteacher, subject to personal extenuating circumstances.

A student with an LOA request should be aware that their Academy reference will be adversely affected. The Education Welfare Service will be informed of unauthorised absences relating to requests for LOA and will take appropriate action. They may issue a Penalty Notice (£60 per parent for each child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent for each child if paid within 28 days). Failure to pay within the 28 days may lead to prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## **Persistent absence**

The Department for Education currently defines a persistent absentee as a student who has missed 10% of the possible sessions, whether absence is authorised or unauthorised. This level of absence is detrimental to progress and Beacon Academy expects that every parent will fully

support staff and co-operate to address their child's persistent absence. All students' attendance is closely monitored.

If a student is in these categories for genuine, legal reasons, staff will provide academic and pastoral support to enable them to maintain progress as much as is possible. Medical extenuating circumstances will be required to be evidenced by the parent and/or relevant medical practitioner before absences are authorised. For this reason it is important that parents keep us informed of anything that may impact on their child's attendance.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised absences**

The Academy requests parents provide medical confirmation in order to enable absences to be authorised. Examples of medical confirmation include GP, hospital and dental appointments cards and prescribed medications. Providing medical confirmation allows the academy to authorise absences as schools have a duty to inform the Local Authority of regular absences. The Academy is unable to authorise absences due to illness without the provision of written medical evidence. Absences are authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.

### **Monitoring the attendance of students in Alternative Provision**

For those students who are placed in alternative education provision, attendance information is received from the alternative provider on a daily basis and followed up with a weekly report. This information is sent to the DLS. Attendance of students placed on BAC trials is monitored by the trial Academy and if there are any attendance issues, this is shared with Beacon Academy through the weekly BAC meetings or direct to the DLS. Students placed with alternative providers and those of BAC trials are recorded as 'D' on the register to show that they are Dual registered with Beacon Academy and the receiving placement.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Role and responsibilities of the Attendance Officer (AO):**

- Establish and investigate reasons for absence
- Communicate attendance and punctuality concerns to parents
- Meet with parents and students to identify barriers to securing regular school attendance and implement appropriate support in response to these
- Set and monitor student attendance targets
- Report attendance concerns to the DSL and Education Welfare Service
- Where parents have failed to secure the regular school attendance of their child, make the appropriate referrals for legal action to the Local Authority
- Undertake home visits to parents regarding attendance concerns
- Maintain and monitor the academy registers and code student attendance accordingly

#### **Role and responsibilities of the form tutor:**

- For maintaining and completing an accurate register and ensuring that any absences are covered with a note
- Assist the DLS in investigating any unexplained non-attendance when the student returns and inform the DLS/Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator of any concerns

- Be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible. This is the responsibility of the form tutor and should be communicated to the DLS via the attendance and punctuality referral procedure.

### Role of the class teacher

The class teacher is responsible for the accurate and punctual completion of registers in **each lesson**. They are also responsible for the completion of the afternoon registration process. Class amendments are to be implemented with appropriate SLT approval, and/or DLS's knowledge. Any changes to class lists need to be communicated with the Data Manager as soon as possible.

### Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DLS)

To facilitate and intervene as required, ensuring that all students attend school regularly and receive appropriate education to meet their needs within the Academy. The DLS will also undertake a comprehensive assessment of the student and family's social, emotional and educational needs within legislation and government guidelines. The DLS is also involved in raising the profile of attendance and punctuality within the Academy and community, by working to develop procedures and initiatives aimed at raising attendance and punctuality. The DLS will undertake a comprehensive assessment of all students who are engaged in alternative provision, liaising daily with providers to ensure that attendance and safeguarding measures are in line with statutory requirements.

### Definition of the parent

*Throughout this policy the term parent is used as defined as in section 576 of the Education Act 1996*

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

### OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC ATTENDANCE RESPONSE OVERVIEW

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>By Whom</u>	<u>Monitored by</u>
	First day absence	Text/telephone contact Home visit	AO	DLS
	Subsequent absences	Home Visit from Education Welfare Service	AO, Education Welfare Officer	DLS
	Attendance 95% and below	Letter of concern to parent requesting medical evidence for subsequent absences	AO	DLS
	Continued unauthorised absences	Penalty Notice Warning Letter sent to parent advising of 15 day monitoring period.	AO, Education Welfare Service	DLS

		Parents may be referred to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice requested should there be further absence during this period		
S1	Continued attendance under 95% or no significant improvement.  <i>*Students who meet all attendance targets during the monitoring period but whose attendance returns to unacceptable levels following the close of formal monitoring – will return to the process at stage 1.</i>	Academy Attendance Panel (AAP) Meeting – targets set.  In event of an improvement in attendance but not yet to acceptable levels, attendance targets may be extended for a 2-4 week period.  Subsequent absences may result in a referral to S2 or S3	AO	DLS
S2	Attendance under 92.5% or no significant improvement during AAP target period.	Headteacher Attendance Panel (HAP) Meeting – targets set  In event of an improvement in attendance but not yet to acceptable levels , attendance targets may be extended for a 2-4 week period  Parents may be referred to the Local Authority for Prosecution if the HAP targets are not met (S4)	AO, Headteacher	DLS
S3	Attendance under 90% or no significant improvement during target periods	Local Authority Attendance Panel (LAP) Meeting – targets set  In event of an improvement in attendance but not yet to acceptable levels , attendance targets	AO, Education Welfare Service	DLS



		may be extended for a 2-4 week period		
S4	Attendance under 90% or no significant improvement during LAP and/or HAP attendance target period.	Notice of intention to prosecute letter issued.  Prosecution notice served to Local Authority	AO working with the Education Welfare Service	DLS

**Attendance Codes:**

/ & \	Present	N	No reason yet provided
B	Educated off site	O	Unauthorised absence
C	Other authorised circumstances	P	Approved sporting activity
D	Dual Registration	R	Religious observance
E	Excluded	S	Study Leave
G	Holiday (not agreed)	T	Traveller absence
H	Holiday (agreed)	U	Late after registers closed
I	Illness	V	Educational Trip or Visit
J	Interview	W	Work experience
L	Late before registers closed	X	Non-compulsory school absence
M	Medical/Dental appointment	-	All should attend/no mark