Darlinghurst

ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Darlinghurst Academy is committed to providing an effective and efficient education for all students. We will ensure that all students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impeded full attendance are identified and acted upon on as soon as possible. The academy will actively promote the value of regular attendance. We recognise that academies that have high attendance are effective in promoting a positive attitude to attendance across the whole academy. The policy will be applied fairly consistently and will always consider the individual needs of students and their families who have barriers to attendance.

2. Statutory framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a student is required to attend regularly at the academy where they are a registered student. The academy is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Only if the academy is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered will the absence be authorised. Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more off school. Severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more off school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The various stakeholders in academy attendance have the following roles and responsibilities.

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body has the following statutory duties in relation to academy attendance:

- Ensure that admission and attendance registers are properly kept
- Ensure that attendance statistics are made available to the DfE and the LA, including informing the LA if a student has been continuously absent for 2 weeks or more (without a medical certificate).
- Ensure that attendance data, including authorised and unauthorised absence is provided in the Governing body's annual report to parents and in the academy prospectus.
- Hold Principal to account for implementation of policy.

In addition, governors will adopt the following strategies which are recognised good practice:

- Governors agree attendance targets to help the academy to further improve attendance.
- Governors participate in training on attendance issues. In addition, the Governors see that staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Ensure that the academy monitors attendance and evaluates the success of the academy's Attendance Policy, as part of academy self-evaluation. The results of this process are reported to governors, who monitor attendance and punctuality at the academy on a termly basis.
- The Principal's termly report to governors provides attendance data and an analysis of this data.
- Promoting the importance of academy attendance across the academy's policies and ethos.
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

Governors are encouraged to ask questions about:

- The attendance of different groups within the academy;
- Any comparative information with other academies;
- Trends in attendance

The governing body has a designated governor for attendance, who is Mrs Megan Jenkins who links with the academy on attendance matters.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance and ensures that the academy meets the legal requirements, sets required targets for attendance, unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures. The Principal ensures that:

- Staff are provided with a positive approach to attendance across the academy, using agreed strategies.
- Parents and students are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission.
- The academy rigorously monitors attendance and will take necessary action to further improve attendance.
- Under The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995, there is a duty to make a return to the Local Education Authority where there is a poor pattern of attendance or a student has been absent for more than two weeks.
- The academy works in effective partnership with other agencies which may support attendance issues e.g. Social Services, Early Help etc.
- Implementation of this policy at the academy.
- Monitoring academy absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Southend- on- Sea Borough Council LA requires that returns of attendance be made each half-term. The information in these returns is fed back to academies in a class-by-class form and will be monitored by the academy Attendance Team.

3.3 Designated SLT for attendance

The SLT member responsible for attendance has responsibility for:

- A clear overview of attendance across all years, colleges and groups of students. This includes a clear focus on boys, girls, Pupil Premium and SEND, LAC, Young Carers, ethnic minorities, EAL and any other vulnerable groups that show low attendance.
- Analyse all attendance data and create a strategic plan in partnership with Class Teachers, SENCO, Specialists and any other coordinator that is responsible for a vulnerable group.
  Meet with Attendance Officer at least once a week to look at actions and strategies to improve attendance.
- Identify students that have low attendance and put a support plan in place to improve attendance across the academy.

- Ensure that the Attendance Officer has sightings of all students in the academy and arranges sightings of any student that has not attended the academy in the last 10 school days.
- Visit and have an overview of any student that is on alternative provision and ensure that they have a comfort letter from the provider to show that all staff have been DBS checked.
- Ensure that all students that receive provision off-site are checked by the Attendance Officer and that progress reports are collected to show progress of students at the alternative provider and communicate this with the Progress Leaders.
- Compare academy data with local authority and national data.

The designated SLT Lead for attendance at Darlinghurst is Mrs Tracy Grant.

3.4 Attendance Officer supported by other administrative staff

The Attendance Officer takes oversight of registration procedures, ensuring that staff keep registers in the correct manner, monitoring overall attendance and advising the Principal and Governors.

The Attendance Officer has responsibility for:

- Attendance. Gives attendance issues a high profile in the academy, through staff meetings, assemblies and parent contact.

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the principal.

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.

- Advising the principal who authorises when to issue fixed penalty notices.

- The designated Attendance Officer is responsible for supporting class teachers and SLT in following up all attendance issues including post registration. This includes providing all up-to-date data.

- The designated Attendance Officer meets regularly with academy Attendance Team and will discuss attendance issues highlighted by the academies monitoring system.

- If contacted by a parent in respect of an attendance issue, the academy will arrange to meet with parents who have concerns as a matter of priority and work with them in the interest of their child.

- The Attendance Officer will contact the parent or carer daily by text and phone call if absence is not notified. If nothing is heard a letter will be sent to enquire about the reason for absence and a home visit may be made. If nothing is heard the parents will be invited into the academy to discuss the issues. If the absence continues for two

weeks, the student should be referred to the LA School Attendance Team officer and a meeting will be arranged.

- If there are any Child Protection concerns the designated professional for Child Protection should be informed on the first day of absence. The Attendance Officer will also notify the Year Leader of any attendance concerns after they have contacted their parents and their efforts have failed to achieve improvement. After the Attendance Officer has worked with the parent to achieve good attendance and this has failed a letter will then be sent to parents to explain that as they have failed to sustain an improvement in attendance, they will be referred to Early Help.

- The Attendance officer needs to produce data sheets for attendance on a half termly basis for all stakeholders to analyse.

- The Attendance Officer needs to make daily contact with all students that are on alternative provision and check that these students receive progress reports from the provider.

- The Attendance officer will regularly liaise with class teachers to identify and discuss children with attendance concerns, reviewing interventions.

The Attendance Officer is Miss Rebecca Davis.

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers have a vital role to play in raising the attendance and punctuality in our academy.

- Class teachers ensure that start of day routines are orderly and calm and that the registers are called promptly and correctly. Registers will be closed 20 minutes after gates close so that the information is available for inspection and processing.

- Class teachers are responsible for welcoming students back to academy on their return from absence. They will also notify other staff members as soon as possible if a student is experiencing particular difficulties that led to absence.

3.6 Parents and Carers

Darlinghurst Academy wishes to work in partnership with parents to achieve good academy attendance.

- Parents should ensure their children attend regularly and punctually.

- Parents should provide the academy with up- t o - d a t e information about points of contact and those with 'parental responsibility'.

- Parents or carers should contact the academy on each day of the student's absence. They should state the reason for their absence and also the date on which they are expected to return.

- When an appointment has been made for medical reasons, these should be made outside academy time when possible, the appointment card should be shown in advance to the attendance officer.

- Parents should inform the academy of any relevant factors (e.g. bereavement) which could affect the child's attendance and behaviour.
- Parents should not take holidays in term time.
- Make sure their child attends every day at 8:40 on time.
- Call the academy to report their child's absence before 9:30 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and, advise when they are expected to return.

4 Strategies for promoting attendance:

Darlinghurst Academy will offer an environment in which students feel valued and welcomed. The academy's ethos demonstrates that students feel their presence in the academy is important, that they will be missed when they are absent / late and that follow up action will be taken.

- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to student's needs.
- A variety of methods will be used to contact parents in order to alert them of any attendance concerns the academy has, such as first day calls, ping messages, letters, e-mails and home visits.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy / practice.
- Good attendance awards will be presented at the end of term and at celebration assemblies.
- Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The Attendance Officer along with designated SLT for attendance will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, MCAS, academy website, parents evening, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.
- The Principal will make an annual report to the academy's governing body on attendance matters.

4.1 Recording attendance by:

- Keeping an attendance register and place all students on this register
- Take the attendance register at the start of each school day, after lunchtime and mark them as:
    - Present
    - Attending an approved off-site activity
    - Absent
    - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date that the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

We will record:

- All students' attendance and whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- Nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- Students must arrive at the academy by 8.40 on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am. The register must be sent within the first 20 minutes of start of the day.

4.2 Unplanned absence:

- The student's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the academy or leaving a message on the academy absence line stating the name of student that will be absent, their tutor group and the reason for their absence.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy may ask the students parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the academy is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.
- A fine to parents must be considered if a child misses 5 days (or 10 half days) of school for unauthorised absence.

4.3 Planned Absence:

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment. Parent/Carer of students needs to let the academy know prior to absence by telephone call via absence line, the name and class of the student that will have a planned absence, The reason for the planned absence and when the student will be absent.
- However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of the academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 7 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality:

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence:

- If a student is absent, the attendance office will make every attempt to contact the Parent/Carer of the students that are absent without authorisation.
- Where any pupil we expect to attend the academy does not, or stops attending, without reason, the academy will:
  - Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the academy may contact social services or the police.
  - Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

5 Attendance concerns:

When a student from this academy is absent for no apparent reason, it is the duty of **all staff** to consider possible causes. When considering reasons, they should bear in mind factors that could relate to child protection, behaviour, discipline and the anti- bullying policies. The class teacher will have a particular role to play in identifying reasons for absence and addressing such issues, with the support of the whole academy staff.

6 A staged approach

The academy adopts Southend-on-Sea LA's policy, strategy and guidance document. The Early Help Family Support Team can be contacted via email on: SchoolAttendance@Southend.gov.uk or telephoning 01702 212336.

If you need help and support, an Early Help Family Support Officer is on duty every day between 9am and 5.30pm and can be contacted on 01702 215783 or via: EarlyHelpContactPoint@southend.gov.uk or via Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS2 6ER.

7 How to request a leave of absence

Parents/Carers need to make any request for leave of absence to the principal in writing at least one month ahead of date of leave of absence. This request needs to include period of absence, reason and how the parent will support their child to avoid them falling behind. The principal will reply in writing whether the leave of absence is granted or not and if the absence will be authorised. It is only in extreme circumstances that leave of absence will be granted and absence authorised.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see section 4.4)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the students' parents belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

- Modified Learning Plan requests will only be granted when all other options have been exhausted and need to be agreed in consultation with the Principal, DSL and SENCo.

8 Holidays during term time

This academy seeks to minimise the amount of absence taken in term time and the Governing Body of this academy will not authorise any absence due to holiday.

Should a student fail to return without any other contact with the academy, following notification to the Local Authority, they may be taken off roll after ten school days. (Education Student Registration) Regulations 1995:

S.9(e).

The Governors will not authorise any holidays at times when students are scheduled to take public examinations. Parents will be notified as soon as these dates are known.

9 Attendance Team

Whole Academy Attendance	Local Authority
Senior Leader for Attendance: Mrs Tracy Grant **Attendance Officer:** Miss Rebecca Davis	**Local Authority School Attendance Team**

A fixed term penalty notice will be issued for example when support is not appropriate for a situation (e.g. for unauthorised holiday in term time) or not engaging and making progress and improving attendance in spite of interventions and support.

For more information on fines, please click on the link below:
https://www.southend.gov.uk/school-attendance/school-attendance-1

10 Attendance Concern

If a student's attendance drops below 95% a letter will be sent to you confirming your child's attendance and advising of the need for the attendance to improve.

If no improvement is recorded then the following intervention stages are triggered:

Attendance Concern Letter

We will write to you if your child has more than 5 days absence in the Autumn term or their attendance is below 95% (Spring Term), 97% (Summer Term)

Stage 1:

If the attendance continues to fall below 90% (Persistent Absence Threshold) you will be contacted to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer. A plan/set of strategies will be put in place to encourage good attendance as a supportive measure.

Stage 2:

If there is still no improvement, you will be contacted to attend a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If all interventions are unsuccessful, you will be invited to attend a review panel meeting. This meeting will include a member of the Early Help, Family Support and Youth Offending Services and a member of the governing body. At this meeting, a final warning letter will be given with a view to issuing you with a fixed penalty notice.

Attendance Codes	New Mark Description	Mark Meaning
/	Morning session – present at the school when attendance register begins to be taken	Present
\	Afternoon session – present at the school when attendance register begins to be taken+	Present
B*	Attending a place for any other approved educational activity	Educational Activity
C	Absent with leave for other circumstances	Authorised Absent
C0	Absent with leave for other circumstances	Authorised Absent
C1	Absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance	Authorised Absent
C2	Absent with leave, of compulsory school age and temporary reduced timetable does not require them to attend	Authorised Absent
D	Attending another school at which they are a registered pupil	Cancelled
E	Excluded from the school	Authorised Absent
G	Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday	Unauthorised Absent
I	Unable to attend because of sickness	Authorised Absent

Attendance Codes	New Mark Description	Mark Meaning
J1	Absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absent
K*	Attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by LA	Educational Activity
L	Absent from the school when attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended	Present
M	Absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised Absent
N	Absent – circumstances not yet established	Unauthorised Absent
O	Absent – other circumstances	Unauthorised Absent
P	Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity	Educational Activity
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements by LA to facilitate their attendance	Cancelled
R	Day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs	Authorised Absent
S	Absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised Absent
T	Mobile child whose parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and is travelling with that parent	Authorised Absent
U	Absent for registration – arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absent
V	Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a visit or trip	Educational Activity
W	Attending a place for an approved education activity that is work experience	Educational Activity
X	Absent with leave, not of compulsory school age and timetable does not require them to attend	Cancelled
Y1	Unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of pupil's home and transport to and from school normally provided is not available	Cancelled

Attendance Codes	New Mark Description	Mark Meaning
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency	Cancelled
Y3	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and pupil cannot be accommodated in parts of the premises that remain in use	Cancelled
Y4	Whole school closed when school was due to meet for a session, but session has been cancelled	Cancelled
Y5	Unable to attend because pupil is subject to a sentence of detention	Cancelled
Y6	Travel to or attendance at school would be contrary/prohibited by guidance/law relating to incidence or transmission of infection or disease	Cancelled
Y7*	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Cancelled