

John Whitgift Academy

Attendance Policy

At John Whitgift Academy:

- We work in partnership with parents.
- We have inclusive principles.
- We work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration.

In our academy there is the right to:

- **Learn** in an encouraging environment.
- Feel **safe** and cared for in the academy.
- **Achieve** the best qualifications possible.
- **Enjoy** time in the academy.
- **Know** that any adult in the academy can be approached for help, advice or guidance.

For students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they accept our minimal expectations which are:

- **Attend the academy regularly.**
- Are **punctual**, arriving to the academy and lessons on time.
- Have the correct equipment and attitude for learning.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching and learning routines, so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring regular attendance is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from the academy without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, students and all members of staff. There is a clear understanding by all staff of the links between behaviour, attendance and student progress and attainment.

TO HELP US ALL FOCUS ON THIS WE WILL:

- Report to parents half-termly on attendance and punctuality
- Celebrate and reward good attendance in a number of ways
- Work and meet with parents to raise attendance levels across the academy

- Support and guide parents with any issues

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE:

Every half day absence from the academy must be classified by the academy (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably by telephoning the academy on the morning of each day's absence. **Please note that the academy does have an answer machine service so that messages can be left out of academy hours. And parents can also use the School Comms or gateway to send a message out of hours.**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the academy for a reason like illness, medical or dental appointments (with evidence such as an appointment card or letter) which unavoidably fall in academy time. Any other unavoidable causes are at the discretion of the academy in line with government legislation to authorise. However, wherever possible appointments should be made outside of academy hours to prevent missed learning. The academy requests students attend school before and/or after medical appointments, where possible. The academy can and does request medical evidence to support such appointments or absence if they are made on a frequent basis and will unauthorise if it is not received.

Illness of over 2 days may not be authorised without medical evidence.

During an academic year, when a student has had three separate illness related absences, any subsequent absence may not be authorised unless evidence is provided. This could be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Please note that the Academy is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.

Unauthorised absences are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes: (Please note this list is not exhaustive)

- Parents/carers keeping children off from the academy unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive in the academy too late to get a mark
- Shopping, birthdays, hair appointments or looking after other children or family member.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Not having the correct school uniform
- Visits from relatives

If your child is reluctant to attend the Academy or is having any problems with irregular attendance then this is best sorted out between the academy, the parents and the child.

We do request that parents do not keep their child off with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold.

If there are any concerns about your child's attendance, please contact the attendance team, or your child's Learning Manager who will be pleased to help.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA):

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their attendance across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any young person's educational prospects. As an academy we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark, parents/carers will be immediately informed. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic tracking as absence affects progress and attainment. An Action Plan is completed for each student. Students with Persistent Absentee status may be assigned to dedicated Persistent Absence tutor groups in order that they can be supported to raise their attendance.

All our potential PA students and students with less than 90% attendance are automatically made known to the Local Authority every term.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES:

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the academy by 8.25 am on the first day of absence and any subsequent days they are absent. This can be either by phone 01472 311080 option 1 (we do have a voicemail) or using the Academy text message service or school gateway app.

If your child is absent and we have not received a reason-we will:

- Telephone or text on the first day of absence
- Make a home visit
- After 2 or more days of absence, we will make a safe and well check, even if we have a reason for the absence.
- Send an unexplained absence letter requesting contact and confirmation you were aware of the absence.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things; for example, if your child is unwell or we need to make contact if your child has an unexplained absence, so we need to have your up-to-date contact numbers at all times. Please note no student is sent home unwell

without contacting a parent or carer. We expect all students to be collected by an adult when they are unwell

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES:

If we have a concern regarding your child's attendance, we may:

- Contact you by either via telephone or email.
- Send out a letter of concern.
- Make a home visit.
- Learning Manager's may meet with your child on a weekly basis to discuss any concerns regarding their attendance.
- Convene an Academy Attendance Panel Meeting to identify barriers to regular school attendance.
- Place your Child on weekly attendance targets and agree an action plan to support your child to raise their attendance.
- Convene a Principal and/or Governor's Attendance Panel meeting to discuss potential referral to the Local Authority to commence legal proceedings

ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW:

If your child has further unauthorised absences, the academy will refer direct to the Local Authority for statutory intervention. This could mean a Penalty Notice or prosecution. **Under the Education Act 1996, Section 444, it states, "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence."**

LATENESS:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Lessons begin at 8.25 am, so students need to ensure that they are punctual to the Academy in order to not miss any vital learning. **All students are expected to arrive on time at the Academy for 08.20 a.m.**

If a pupil arrives at the academy after the gates close at 08.20 a.m. they **MUST** report to THE ATTENDANCE OFFICE to sign in.

At 9.00am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after this time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and will mean they have an unauthorised absence, this code is a U. This may mean that you could face the possibility of prosecution for persistent unauthorised late arrivals.

Students who are late to the academy after their lesson begins will be issued with an hour's detention the same day. A detention sticker will be given to the student to put in their planner, if

the student already has a detention for that particular day, then it will be re-arranged for the next available day depending on whether they have detentions already.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME:

In line with the Governments new legislation effective from 1st September 2013 no requests for holidays can be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.

For the academy to consider exceptional circumstances a leave of absence form must be submitted at least four weeks before the proposed start of the holiday and booking the holiday. For the Academy to consider exceptional circumstances the request must be put in writing together with any supporting evidence.

All holidays will be classed as unauthorised, unless you receive confirmation in writing from the Academy that the holiday has been authorised. There are no exceptions.

All holidays that are unauthorised will be referred to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

Please be aware that the Education Welfare Service will be informed of unauthorised absences relating to requests for leave of absence and may issue a penalty notice. The penalty is £60 (per parent for each child) if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 (per parent for each child) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Parents may be prosecuted if the 28 day payment period has expired and full payment has not been made. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

ACADEMY TARGETS:

The academy has targets to improve attendance and you have a vital part to play in meeting these targets.

Whilst we strive for every student to achieve 100% attendance the minimum level of attendance for this academy is 97% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your daughter's/son's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful education

Through the academic year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this academy are:

- Mrs K. Cox, Education Welfare Officer, Year 7, 8 and 9
- Miss S. Dobson, Education Welfare Officer, Year 9, 10 and 11
- Miss A. Winn, Learning Manager, Year 7

- Ms T Parker, Learning Manager, Year 8
- Mr B. Oakley, Learning Manager, Year 9
- Mr K. Sargent, Learning Manager, Year 10
- Mr P. Tuffnell, Learning Manager, Year 11

SUMMARY :

The academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figure to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend the academy regularly and punctually.

All academy staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high level of attendance as possible.

Date of Policy: Sept '21

Review Date: Sept '22