



Attendance Policy

Trust policy

Additional information – available in each Academy

Academy specific procedures

Academy specific letters

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Our Aim

At the Harmony Trust we are committed to establishing a positive, supportive and safe environment where children feel valued. We aim for all our children to achieve to their highest potential and excellent attendance, along with punctuality, is fundamental to ensure every child succeeds. We aim to safeguard the interests of every child, promoting their welfare and opportunities. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring excellent attendance and punctuality are achieved.

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks

Definitions

The Harmony Trust defines “absence” as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

The Harmony Trust defines an “**authorised absence**” as:

- An absence for 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.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy have granted leave.
- An absence due to unplanned and significant family emergency, meaning you must leave in an emergency.

The Harmony Trust defines an “**unauthorised absence**” as:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Recurring medical appointments of a non-urgent nature.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed and have been booked or planned in advance.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

See pages 6 and 7 for further details

The Harmony Trust defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for whatever reason.

Throughout this policy wherever Principals are referred to this means Executive Principals / Principals and Heads of Academy.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Statutory registration codes must be used (see appendix A)

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents / carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for the pupil’s absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is

provided by the parent / carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration – England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application has been made in advance and the Principal of the academy considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Principals no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. Whilst the Principal will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family **chooses** to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and it will be referred to the Local Authority. A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child. This is in line with the Local Authority policy.

All leave of absence taken without the agreement of the Academy will be recorded as unauthorised.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) all our academies will, after making appropriate checks, report all children Missing from Education to the Local Authority. The LA has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Key roles and responsibilities

- The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures.
- The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- The Board of Trustees has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Trust's complaints policy.
- The Principal / Head of Academy will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures.
- Academy designated staff will be responsible for the day to day implementation of procedures, monitoring of attendance and communication with parents.
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for raising the profile of good attendance in line with school policy, celebrating success and communicating the importance with pupils and parents. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children ensuring that they attend school every day during the school term.
- Pupils are responsible for ensuring that they attend school every day and any agreed clubs and activities throughout the school year.

Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

Registers are taken twice a day and are reviewed by the attendance officer. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then there will be a phone call home to check on why a child is not in school. Where necessary a home visit will be undertaken.

Attendance records are kept on the Academy Management information system. Daily, weekly and termly attendance is monitored. Parents will be made aware if their child's attendance is 'at risk' of falling below national averages and lower. If the attendance drops below 90% the pupils is deemed a "persistent absentee" and closer monitoring and support will be undertaken.

Returns of academy data are made annually to the Department for Education and benchmark data exists to compare our academies locally and nationally.

Our academies set attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Academy senior leadership team and the Trust Leadership team. Attendance data is sent to the Board of Trustees.

Specific Guidelines regarding Attendance

Rewarding Good Attendance

We expect every child to come to school on time every day. We reward good attendance with special recognition certificates and prizes where appropriate at particular stages through the academic year. Each academy has their own attendance rewards system.

Designated staff within school work hard to promote good attendance and punctuality through the use of Academy designed reward systems and attendance monitoring.

Absence procedures

- Parents/carers must contact the academy as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- A phone call will be made to all parents / carers of children where no contact has been received in order to ascertain the reason for absence. This will be completed on each day of absence unless specific reason is known.
- Alternatively, parents/carers may call into school and report to the school office where, if necessary arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Principal / Head of academy or other senior leader in school.
- If pupil absence drops below 90%, the local authority Attendance Officer will be informed and they will become involved in the monitoring procedures for that pupil.

Contact information

- Parents/carers must provide accurate and up to date contact details.
- Parents/carers are responsible for updating the academy if the details change.

Attendance Officer

- If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the local authority Attendance Officer who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.
- If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the local authority Attendance Officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

Lateness

Registers are taken twice a day- once at the start of the morning and again at the start of the afternoon session. The times of each academy's school day is found in appendix 2.

Term time leave

- At The Harmony Trust, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, Principals no longer have the discretion to authorise holidays during term time.
- As term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.
- Any notifications of leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave of Absence Notification Form' which is available from the academy office
- A request can only be authorised where there are 'exceptional circumstances' for example bereavement or serious illness.

Exceptional leave is **NOT:**

Availability of cheap flights and / or holidays

Availability of desired accommodation

Parent / carer work commitments

Poor weather experienced during school holidays

Dates overlapping with the beginning or end of half terms or terms

Circumstances where children can be looked after by close family members ie, the other parent

- The Principal will meet with parents/carers about their request and explain that 'holidays' during term time are classed as unauthorised. Parents / carers should not book travel before this meeting.
- Parents/carers may lose their child's place on the school roll if the child does not return within five days of the agreed date of return.

Religious Observance

- The Harmony Trust will try to ensure that families are able to celebrate key religious festivals without it affecting their child's education.
- When large numbers of our pupils are affected, the Academy will try to accommodate Trust closure days as close to anticipated religious observance days, to allow for pupils to take religious observance without affecting their attendance. Wherever this is facilitated it will be for one academy day. All pupils must return to the Academy as usual the following day. Where this is not possible, specific decisions regarding time off for religious observance will be made and shared with parents well in advance.

Appointments

- As far as possible, parents/carers should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Where this is not possible, an appointment card must be shown to school.
- If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they must be signed out by a parent/carer.
- Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Persistent Absence

An individual child whose attendance is under 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised) will be closely monitored by the Principal / Head of Academy and designated member of staff, a letter from the Principal / Head of Academy will be issued regarding our concerns about their attendance.

Persistent Absence is recorded half termly and sent to the Local Authority and the Trust for monitoring purposes. The academy will inform the Local Authority of any child who has been absent from school without the school's permission for 10 days or more and the Local Authority will follow the agreed monitoring and penalty notice procedures.

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off-site or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, such as school residential trips, day visits to secondary schools or curriculum enrichment activities at local secondary schools are marked as present.

Appendix 1 – Absence Codes

/\	Present	I	Illness (not medical)	P	Approved sporting activity	W	Work experience
B	Educated off site	J	Interview	R	Religious observance	#	Planned whole or partial school closure
C	Other authorised circumstances	L	Late (before reg closed)	S	Study leave	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision)	M	Medical / Dental	T	Traveller absence	Z	Pupil not on roll
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	N	No reason yet provided	U	Late (after register closed)	-	All should attend/ No mark recorded
H	Holiday (agreed)	O	Unauthorised (not covered by other code)	V	Educational visit or trip		

Appendix 2 – Academy specific information

Oldham

	Alt	Greenhill	Northmoor	Richmond	Westwood
School day starts am	8.50am (doors open at 8.30)	9am (doors open at 8.30am)	9am (doors open at 8.15am)	9am (doors open at 8.15am)	Nursery 8.45 Rec, KS1, KS2 9am (doors open 8.30)
Child deemed late – before register closed (L)	Before 9.30am	Before 9.30am	Before 9.30am	Before 9.30am	Before 9.30am
Children deemed late – after register closed (U)	After 9.30am	After 9.30am	After 9.30am	After 9.30am	After 9.30am
Afternoon session starts	Rec – 1pm KS1 12.50 Y3&4 12.40 Y5&6 1.30	1pm (EY & KS1) 1.05 Y3 1.15 (KS2)	KS1 1pm KS2 1.15pm	Nursery 12.30 KS1 1pm KS2 1.15pm	Rec / KS1 1.00 KS2 1.15
Day ends	3.10 KS1 3.15 LKS2 3.20 UKS2	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.20

Derby

	Ashcroft	Alvaston	Carlyle	Cavendish	Cottons Farm	Hackwood	Lakeside	Reigate	Village
School day starts am	8.55	8.50	8.45	8.50	8.55	8.50	8.45	8.55	8.50
Child deemed late – before register closed (L)	9.05 before 9.30	9.00 before 9.30	9.00	9.00 – before 9.30	9.05 before 9.25	9.00 before 9.30	9.00 before 9.30	9.10 before 9.30	9.00 before 9.30
Children deemed late – after register closed (U)	9.30	9.30	9.20	9.30	9.25	9.30	9.30	9.30	9.30
Afternoon session starts	FS / KS1 1.00 KS2 1.15	1.00	Nsy 12.10 / 12.40 Rec – Y2 1.15	Y3 – 1.05 Y4-6 1.10	1.00pm	12.45	1.10pm	1.10pm	EYFS 12.45 KS1 1.00 LKS2 1.15 UKS2 1.25
Day ends	3.20	3.20	Nsy pm 3.10 Rec – Y2 – 3.20pm	3.15	3.20	3.15	3.30	3.30	Nsy 3.30 Rec 3.05 KS1 / KS2 3.15