



'Christ at the centre, children at the heart'

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi-Academy Trust will deliver outstanding educational, spiritual and moral outcomes for all children regardless of their faith or backgrounds within an ethos based on full inclusion, high expectations, innovation, outstanding teaching and learning, and a relentless focus on the needs and potential of every child. Our vision is that every Academy within the Trust has a reputation for excellence in their local communities and beyond.

**Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT**

**Company No: 08444133**

**Registered Office: Fordham Road, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7AA**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## OLW CMAT (THE MAT) ATTENDANCE POLICY

### DEFINITIONS

In this Attendance Policy and Procedure, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- 'Academy' means an Academy within the MAT named at the beginning of this Attendance Policy and includes all sites upon which the Academy undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- 'Board' means the board of Directors of the Academy Trust Company.
- 'Directors' means directors appointed to the Board of the Academy Trust Company.
- 'Governing Board' means the body carrying out the employment functions of the Academy Trust Company and such term may include the Board of Directors and/or a Local Governing Body of the Academy.
- 'Governors' means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Governing Body of the Academy, from time to time.
- 'Local Governing Body' means the group of governors appointed and elected to carry out specified functions in relation to the Academy as delegated by the Academy Trust Company.
- 'Teacher' means a teacher employed by the Academy Trust Company to work at the Academy or within the MAT and, where the context so admits, includes the principal/headteacher.
- 'Headteacher' means the teacher employed within each Academy or across several Academies in the role of CEO, Principal, Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of Academy as appropriate.

### Introduction/Aim

Regular Academy attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. [Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances.

At each Academy within the MAT we believe that regular Academy attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become responsible, organised and motivated adults. We value all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole Academy community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of Academy improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

### Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory Academy age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at Academy or otherwise. A child is of Compulsory Academy Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child

ceases to be of compulsory Academy age on the last Friday in June of the Academy year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory Academy age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require Academies to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the Academy within the MAT defines:

“Absence” as:

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

“Regular attendance” as:

- Attendance at every session the Academy is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

“Authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the Academy has granted leave
- Emergency medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during Academy time, for which the Academy has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the Academy has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

“Unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children off Academy unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the Academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at Academy after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed • Leaving Academy for no reason during the day

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of Academy time across the year for any reason

“Parent” as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

### Categorising Absence and Attendance

The table below shows the national codes which enable all Academies to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, and comply with the regulations.

<b>Absence and Attendance Codes</b>	
<b>Present at Academy</b>	
/ \	Registration code / \ : present in Academy / = am \ =pm
L	Late arrival before the register has closed. Academies should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate. Students at St Alban’s are marked as a U after 09:20
<b>Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity</b>	
B	Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the Academy. Ultimately, Academies are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, Academies are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing Academy work. Academies should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the Academy of any absences by individual pupils. The Academy should record the pupil’s absence using the relevant absence code.
D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the Academy Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one Academy. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other Academy at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital Academy or a special Academy on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another Academy during the session in question. Each Academy should only record the pupil’s attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their Academy. Academies should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment. This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Academies should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the Academy and supervised by someone authorised by the Academy.
V	Educational visit or trip. This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the Academy, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the Academy.
W	Work experience. Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Academies should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the Academy of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

**Absence codes when pupils are not present in Academy**

C	Leave of absence authorised by the Academy. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Academies should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made. If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.
H	Holiday authorised by the Academy. Attendance Officers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Attendance Officer will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from Academy. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments). Academies should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Academies should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, Academies can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Academies can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Academies are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
---	--

M	Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Academies should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of Academy hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of Academy for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
R	Religious observance. Academies must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, Academies should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
S	Study leave. Academies must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into Academy to revise.
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.  This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the Academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend Academy elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that Academy and the main Academy. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at an Academy and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend Academy regularly once registered at An Academy.
<b>Unauthorised Absence from Academy</b>	
G	Holiday not authorised by the Academy or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher. If an Academy does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of Academy, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow Academies to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided. Academies should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record
O	Absent from Academy without authorisation. If the Academy is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Arrived in Academy after registration closed. Academies should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.
<b>Administrative Codes</b>	
X	Not required to be in Academy. This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory Academy age children are not expected to attend.

Y	<p>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Academy site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or</li> <li>• The transport provided by the Academy or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or</li> <li>• A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending Academy.</li> </ul> <p>This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the Academy has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).</li> </ul> <p>This code is collected in the Academy Census for statistical purposes.</p>
Z	<p>Pupil not on admission register. This code is available to enable Academies to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the Academy to ease administration burdens. Academies must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the Academy has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the Academy.</p>
#	<p>Planned whole or partial Academy closure. This code should be used for whole or partial Academy closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of Academies as polling stations.</p>

## Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance means that Attendance Officers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole purpose of a holiday (unless in exceptional circumstances). All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from Academy for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in Academy for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for child due to 'exceptional circumstances.' At each Academy within the MAT, leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This may only be granted at the discretion of the relevant Headteacher. The relevant Academy within the MAT will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher or nominated Attendance Officer at least a month before the planned leave. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered and it will be marked as unauthorised. The relevant Academy within the MAT will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the

absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the Academy may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:-

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Attendance Officer but is still taken.
- A longer period of time is taken in excess of the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, Academy will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

### **Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance**

The Academies within MAT acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside Academy holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the Academy will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the Academy.

### **Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend Academy as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, s. 86 of The Education Act 1944 states that a Traveller parent shall be entitled to be acquitted if his or her child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) during the period of twelve months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted, if the family are of no fixed abode.

However, it should be noted that this provision applies only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending Academy as regularly as that trade permits. It does not mean that part-time education for

Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at Academy.

When trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Cambridge or Suffolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base Academy (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

The relevant Academy within the MAT will be regarded as the base Academy if it is the Academy where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended that Academy within the MAT in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other Academies temporarily while away from their base Academy; in such cases, the pupil's Academy place at the specific Academy within the MAT will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their Academy of usual attendance.

The particular Academy within the MAT can only effectively operate as the child's base Academy if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:



- Advise the Academy of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the Academy regarding proposed return dates

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited Academy
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at an Academy and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending Academy, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Academy. That decision is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping trips including for uniforms
- Non emergency arrangements or appointments e.g. cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's Academy for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend Academy, or inability to attend owing to lack of personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend Academy on health grounds but where the pupil is actually considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the Academy

### **Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our Academies are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or full prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at Academy under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

### Late Arrival at Academy

At every Academy within the MAT all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the Academy year.

Academy	Day Begins	Register Taken	Late before Close	Register Closes
St Louis	08.40	08.50	08.55	09.00
St Felix	08.40	08.45	08.50	08.55
St Marys	08.40	08.50	08.55	09.00
St Pancras	08.50	08.55	09.00	09.05
St Laurence	08.55	09.10	09.15	09.20
St Albans	08.50	08.55	09.00	09.05

The Academy day begins at the time stated above for each Academy. The Academy register will be taken in the Academy as indicated above. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before the 'Late before Close' time it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The Academy register will officially close as indicated above. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to

discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

### Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Regulations, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

A	Where the pupil is registered at the Academy in accordance with the requirements of an Academy attendance order, that another Academy is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at Academy.
B	<p><b>Change of Academy</b></p> <p>Except where it has been agreed by the Head Teacher that the pupil should be registered at more than one Academy, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that they have been registered as a pupil at another Academy.</p>
C	Where a pupil is registered at more than one Academy, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that they have ceased to attend the Academy and the Head Teacher of any other Academy at which they are registered has given consent to the deletion.
D	<p><b>Home education</b></p> <p>In a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that they have ceased to attend the Academy and the Head Teacher has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at Academy.</p>
E	<p><b>Moved away</b></p> <p>Except in the case of a boarder that they have ceased to attend the Academy and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the Academy at which they are registered.</p>
F	<p>In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the pupil has failed to attend the Academy within the ten Academy days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;</li> <li>(ii) the Head Teacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the Academy by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</li> <li>(iii) the Head Teacher and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is</li> </ul>

G	That the pupil is certified by the Academy medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend Academy before ceasing to be of compulsory Academy age, and neither they nor their parent has indicated to the Academy the intention to continue to attend the Academy after ceasing to be of compulsory Academy age.
H	<p>That the pupil has been continuously absent from the Academy for a period of not less than twenty Academy days and</p> <p>(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the Head Teacher in accordance with regulation 6(2);</p> <p>(ii) the Head Teacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the Academy by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</p> <p>(iii) The Head Teacher of the Academy and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</p>
I	That the pupil is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the Head Teacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the Academy at the end of that period.

J	That the pupil has died.
K	That the pupil will cease to be of compulsory Academy age before the Academy next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the Academy; or (ii) The pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the Academies sixth form
L	In the case of a pupil at an Academy other than a maintained Academy, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the Academy.
M	<b>Permanent exclusion.</b> That he has been permanently excluded from the Academy.
N	Where the pupil has been admitted to the Academy to receive nursery education, which he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the Academy.
O	Where— (i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained Academy or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and (iii) Those charges remain unpaid by the pupil’s parent at the end of the Academy term to which they relate

The particular Academy within the MAT will follow the appropriate Local Authority’s (Cambridge County Council or Suffolk County Council) Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown and the Academy will carry out joint enquiries with the County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

### Roles and Responsibilities

At all Academies in the MAT, we believe that improved Academy attendance is a responsibility shared by Directors, Local Governors, Academy staff, parents, pupils and the wider Academy community.

The Local Governors of the relevant Academy and the Directors of the MAT will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the MAT’s Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy in each Academy
- Identify a member of the Directors and each LGB to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with
- Agree Academy attendance targets and submit these, where appropriate, to the relevant Local Authority and Local Governing Body within agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the Academy

- Monitor the Academy's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Local Governors' meetings and to Directors
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the MAT, Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the Academy has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Senior Management Team within each Academy in the MAT will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole Academy approach which reinforces good Academy attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return Academy attendance data to the MAT, Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the Academy's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Local Governors and Directors and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the relevant local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance

All staff at each Academy within the MAT will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole Academy approach which reinforces good Academy attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Regulations and other relevant legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of Academy strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the MAT and Academy's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the Academy staff, parents, and the Academy timetable
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at Academy or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the correct set Academy procedure if they arrive late. This will help the Academy to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of an Academy evacuation

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data
- Undertaking regular attendance meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant staff members where appropriate
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole Academy attendance
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance
- Managing individual pupil casework files
- Coordinating Individual Action Plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of a Family Support Plan (FSP) [or similar depending on the Local Authority] and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract

- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to, if a child is absent from Academy without contact from parents
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole Academy initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies

Each Academy within the MAT requires that parents will:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at Academy
- Instil the value of education and regular Academy attendance within the home environment
- Contact the Academy if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of Academy hours
- Ask the Academy for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their Academy work or home and family life
- Inform the Academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the Academy by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with Academy and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both Academy and home
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues

### **Attendance Protocols**

If a child is absent, the following will be initiated by each Academy:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated where possible for all pupils who are not in Academy after close of register and where no reason for absence is known
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned
- If Academy cannot make contact with a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out
- Academy will telephone home if a pupil leaves the Academy without parental permission. In certain circumstances the Academy may also:
  - Visit the home of the pupil or request a welfare check to be made by the police
  - Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
  - Invite parents to discuss how Academy can support the family to make improvement
  - Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance and advice



- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or referring to Children Services, where there are safeguarding concerns

### **Expected absence procedure for parents:**

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends Academy regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from Academy parents are expected to:

- Contact Academy by telephone call on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return
- If no contact is received, the Attendance protocols will be instigated

### **Support Systems**

All Academies in the MAT recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in Academy. Parents are encouraged to inform Academy of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in Academy, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the Academy identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance.

The Academy will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Parent Support advisor
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- 1 to 1 mentoring
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Engaging the support of other agencies

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the Headteacher will consider the use of legal sanctions following consultation with the Local Authority.

### **Related Policies**

To underpin the values and ethos of our Academy and our intent to ensure that pupils at our Academy attend Academy regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Safeguarding including child protection
- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Exclusion
- Special educational needs
- Teaching and learning
- Behaviour and rewards

### **Statutory Framework**

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Academy attendance](#), DfE (2016)
- [Academy attendance parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance](#), DfE (revised March 2017)
- [Norfolk County Council Children Missing Education Practice & Procedures](#)
- [Suffolk Children Missing Education Protocol](#)
- [‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’](#), DfE (2016)

## Appendix 1: Example warning letter - Fixed Penalty Notice for Academies

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

### Attendance at Academy and legal intervention

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At St Alban's Catholic High School our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers that the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends Academy regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss Academy apart from in exceptional circumstances and Academies must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. 5 consecutive sessions<sup>1</sup> of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time or  
Typically, unauthorised absences of three or more days or a pattern of three or more consecutive or non-consecutive school days of unauthorised absence in the prior 12 weeks are grounds for the consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 Academy weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil at St Alban's Catholic High School who meets either of the criteria, may be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended Academy regularly. I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that the Academy day consists of 2 sessions.

Please note: Retain the original signed and completed forms in Academy records and ensure a copy is returned to the parent/carer of the student to confirm authorisation.

### Leave of absence during Term Time

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends Academy regularly. There is however, a discretionary power to allow leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This is not an entitlement and purely at the discretion of the Academy's Attendance Officer, following the local and national guidance. Academies will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during or leading up to Academy exam periods.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show 10 days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Academies are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence.

The government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the Academy on the student's records. As you may be aware unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

**Discuss with the school any request for leave of absence prior to making a booking. Your child's school may have a designated person for this. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure you receive confirmation from the school before the leave is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation.**

## Appendix 2: Fixed Penalty Notice information for Parents / Carers

### Fixed Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular Academy attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Academy has not given permission for or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the Academy.

**The Academy will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends Academy regularly.**

**The penalty is in the form of a £60 fine per parent/carer per child payable within 21 days, this increases to**

**£120 payable per parent/carer per child within 28 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.**

\*(Academic year =Academy year from September to July)

Covid 19 addendum (accurate at time of writing February 2022)

[Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year)

Please note that parents should abide by the latest government guidance on attendance as advised by the local authority and Academy.