

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Erdington Academy

Part of Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust

Document Owner:	Mr K Pawar
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1. PRINCIPLES:

1.1 Erdington Academy is committed to maximising the attendance of every student during their education at the Academy. Students with frequent absences are being denied equality of opportunity.

1.2 Attendance is inextricably linked to success in all aspects of school life, including examinations, and regular school attendance is vital if students are to benefit from the experiences which the school offers them. Employers and other reference seekers value attendance and punctuality highly as an indicator of reliability.

1.3 Regular school attendance is based on a strong and supportive partnership between the school, parents, Erdington Academy Associates and other outside agencies.

1.4 Parents and Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school unless there is a genuine reason for them being unable to do so and they should have informed the school.

1.5 Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. This policy sets out how school staff will work with pupils, parents, and partners to promote, encourage and support regular attendance at school and remove any barriers to attendance.

2. AIMS:

2.1 To set clear expectations and aspirations that all pupils have a high standard of school attendance and punctuality.

2.2 To improve children's attainment and opportunities through good attendance.

2.3 To make attendance a priority for everyone.

2.4 To ensure there is a clear process to identify and address emerging attendance concerns

2.5 To work effectively with parents, pupils, and partners through building trusted relationships to work together to remove barriers to attendance.

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to the following:

- a welcoming, stimulating, and safe learning environment.
- for all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential.
- listen to parents and pupils to understand barriers to attendance and ensure these needs are met.
- build trusted relationships with parents and pupils where attendance concerns can be discussed, understood.
- high expectations of our pupils and all staff.
- a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum.
- recognise and celebrate achievements in all areas of school life.
- equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life.
- high quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies.
- a range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning.
 - provide experiences, which will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural understanding.
- support, guidance, and training for all those who teach and work with our children.
- foster and maintain links with our wider community

3. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY:

3.1 Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis.

3.2 Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

3.3 All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

3.4 Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive education. Estranged parents with whom the child has had regular contact may be prosecuted as well as the day-to-day carer. Each situation must be dealt with on an individual basis, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern. The term 'parent' also includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children Act 1989 or who have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1999.

4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

4.1 School has an Attendance Champion, a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues. (Mr K Pawar – Vice Principal)

4.2 Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school. If you have a concern about your child's attendance your first point of contact is our Attendance Officer.

4.3 Attendance Line Manager: To oversee and monitor whole-school attendance and punctuality along with Attendance Officer. To report to Leadership Team and Academy Associates and to ensure liaison with outside agencies, Social Services and the Behaviour Support Service.

4.4 Head of Year/Behaviour mentor: To co-ordinate their team of tutors regarding attendance issues. To reinforce good practice at Tutor Development Training sessions and in Year assemblies. To contact parents if House Tutor is unable to establish reasons for absence. To work with Attendance Officer to initiate referrals to the Attendance and Welfare Officer and to be actively involved in referral processes.

4.5 Form Tutor: To ensure accurate marking of registers and to ensure that attendance and punctuality are regular features of tutorial time. To ensure that planned absences are communicated to the Attendance Officer. To carefully monitor attendance patterns and report any concerns to the appropriate Head of Year/Attendance Officer. To respond to weekly feedback on student lateness by discussing concerns with them and to issue L3 when appropriate.

4.6 Teacher: To ensure electronic lesson registers are completed every lesson and in the case of ICT breakdown, to complete a paper register for the Attendance Officer. All period 1 registers must be completed by 10:20 am so that the Attendance Officer can initiate the 'Kids Safe' procedure. A register is to be completed within the first 15 minutes of all lessons.

4.7 Student: To attend regularly and punctually. To sign in at the Attendance Office if arriving in school late after the registers have closed and to produce a note to explain absences and lateness.

4.8 Parent/Carer: To ensure that their children attend school regularly. To inform the school at the earliest possible time of the reason for and the expected length of any absence. To respond promptly to an absence, call from the school. To ensure that no holidays are organised in term-time.

4.9 Attendance Officer/Team: To ensure computerised registers are processed and any absences and lateness's identified. To use 'text message service' to inform parents immediately of any absence. To inform staff and students that registers close at 9.20 am. To work closely with Heads of Year in relation to students whose attendance is causing concern. To produce a breakdown of attendance and percentage attendance for each year group half-termly for an attendance focus in year assemblies. To liaise regularly with line manager and run all Low Attendance and Spotlight letters past them prior to them being sent out, meet with Attendance and Welfare Officer weekly. To process and

implement new systems of work in order to improve attendance. To communicate with parents as and when necessary.

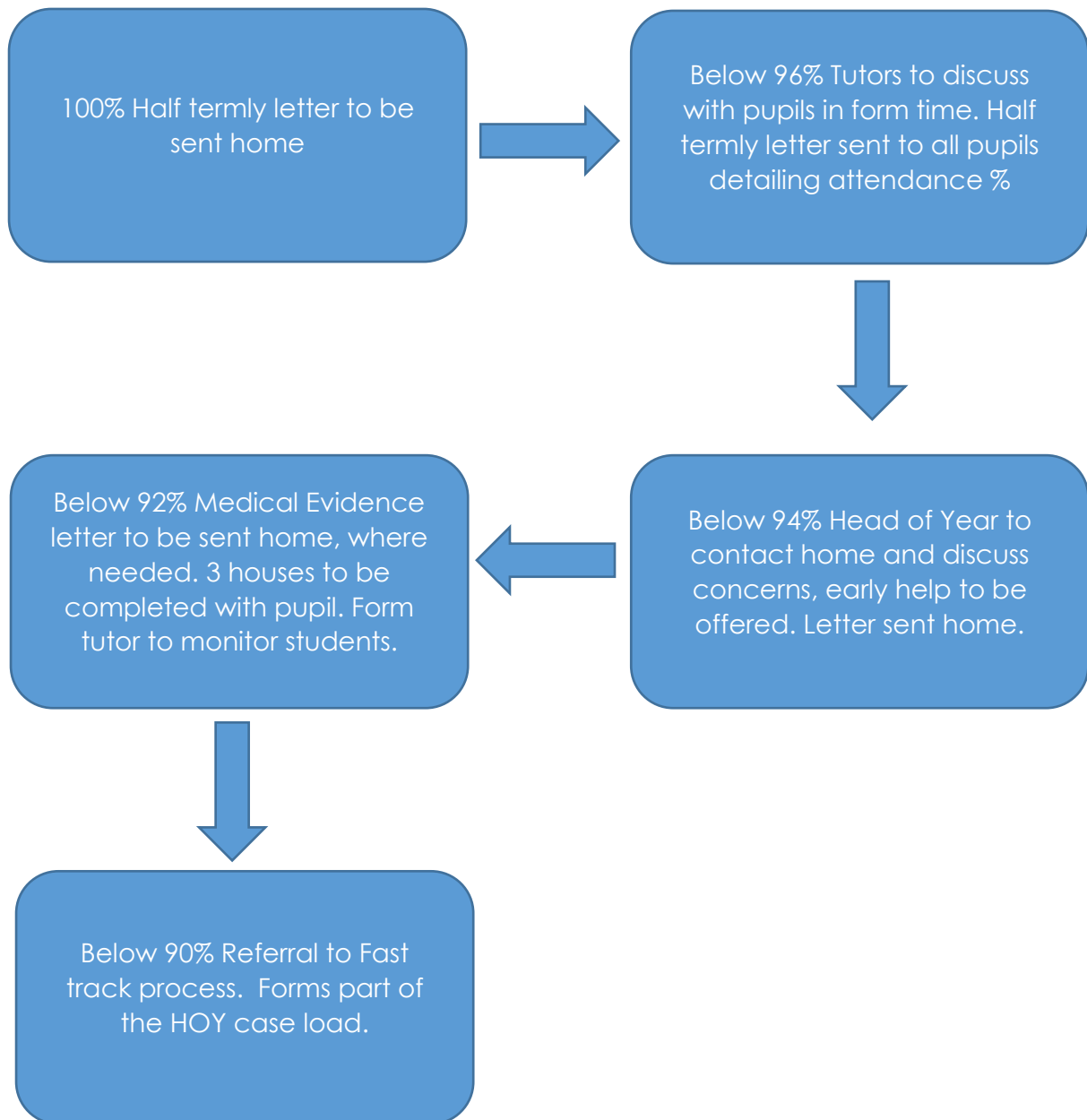
4.10 Erdington Academy Associate: To maintain an interest in attendance statistics and encourage target setting for improvement. To review the success of the attendance policy.

Procedures

Our school procedures follow the expectations set out by the Department for Education in the guidance Working Together to improve school attendance (September 2022).

Our procedures are based around the principles and stages of:

- Preventing poor attendance
- Early intervention and Early Help to address early patterns of poor attendance and agree ways to improve
 - Targeted interventions (including Early Help and Formal interventions) for those children who are persistently absent or severely absent
 - Understanding barriers to individuals' attendance and agree individual plans for children with specific needs.
- Formal Statutory Interventions where support has not been effective or engaged with.



Where attendance has deteriorated rapidly, there are concerning patterns of unauthorised absences, or parents have not responded to concerns raised, a referral may be made straight to Fast Track. The Birmingham attendance process for addressing attendance concerns and where appropriate legal action including the issue of penalty notices will be followed.

School Day and Punctuality It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session. If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer.

PROCEDURES FOR REGISTRATION:

5.1 The accurate and prompt recording of student attendance is essential, and this information is required by the DFE (Department for Education)

5.2 Attendance data is a module on BROMCOM, the internal school network, and the Attendance Officer monitors this.

5.3 Parents are asked to inform the school by 8:30am (by email or by telephone) if their child is going to be absent that day and on subsequent days of absence. If the absence is going to be lengthy, they are asked to inform the Attendance Officer by letter.

5.4 Parents are required to inform the Attendance Officer of medical and dental appointments in advance by using the same system. We ask parents to try to ensure that appointments are made outside of school hours, wherever possible. Parents are also asked to ensure that, if appointments in school time are unavoidable, students attend school prior to the appointment and are returned to school afterwards.

5.5 Students who are late to school for any reason or who have to leave early are required to sign in or out in the Attendance Office.

5.6 If students are not recorded as present, have not signed in or if the school has not heard from parents/carers, an automated text or telephone call will be sent as early as 9:30am.

5.7 If the Academy receives no reason for a student's absence, the Attendance team will make contact asking for an explanation. If no response is received, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

5.8 Students who arrive late to school between the times of 8:45 am and 9.20 am will be met by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, coded with a late mark ('L') and given a consequence.

5.9 Students that arrive to school after 9.20 am with no reasonable explanation will receive a 'U' code (unauthorised late when AM registration closes) for that am registration mark. They will receive a 50min correction on the same day. Once a student receives 10 'U' codes, legal action may be started by the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

6. Absence

6.1 If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response to text messages, they will attempt to make contact by telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits, and referrals to FSW and Welfare Officer and to the police for a safe and well check. Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated. It is imperative that up-to-date contact

numbers and details are provided to school. Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child (KCSIE 2022) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

Illness

6.2 Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the above absence process.

6.3 It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. Each absence will be assessed by the school and they will decide if medical evidence is required. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested. This evidence should be provided into school within a 2-week period.

6.4 The Academy will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance. In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

School may request medical evidence in the following scenarios:

- Attendance is less than 92%
- Child is absent and there are frequent odd days of absences due to reported illness
- Child is absent and the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Child is absent and attendance is below expected levels and there is a concerning pattern of absence/reasons for absence.
- Where there is a medical problem and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support Reintegration of Long-Term Absentees Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of students learning, and positive strategies should be employed to minimise such effects.

Reintegration of Long-Term Absentees

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Key Principles

- We should always keep in touch with a student/and their family during a long absence.
- We should always make sure the pupil is welcomed back
- A clear plan should be discussed and agreed with the parent/carers, pupil and school. Allowing for regular reviews dates.

The school will consider a phased return where appropriate. This needs to be considered carefully and includes seeking expert advice from relevant professionals and co ordinating a multi-agency meeting. Consideration needs to be given to any special needs the pupil may have and appropriate support identified. Consideration must be given to a package of support which may include providing a mentor (staff member/student)

Class Teachers should ensure that the pupil feels welcomed back to school in an appropriate way and take any necessary steps to support their re-integration.

Other reasons for absences:

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

7. PERSISTENT LATENESS: It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging punctuality concerns.

7.1 In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of lateness (late between the times of 8:45 – 9.20) the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers.

7.2 The Head of Year may place a student on an 'Attendance and Punctuality Report' to monitor their punctuality to AM and PM registrations.

7.3 Due to possible legal action, after 10 'U' codes the following procedures are put in place to resolve the problem:

- 5 U codes = a letter sent home and meeting with student, parents/carers and Head of Year
- 10 U codes = a meeting with student, parents/carers and Assistant Head Teacher.
- 15 U codes = a meeting with the student, parent/carers and the Head of Academy or Fairfax Academy Associates
- 20 U codes = Fast Track will instigate legal proceedings where appropriate.

8. PERSISTENT ABSENCE FAST TRACK: It is the responsibility of the school to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns.

8.1 In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful, the Academy will seek advice from other external agencies and involve the Attendance Officer and the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

8.2 Poor attendance is investigated on a daily basis by the Attendance Officer who communicates areas of concern to, Heads of Year, the school's Police Liaison Officer and the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

8.3 A letter of concern is sent to parents if attendance falls below 92% once names have been authorised by the Attendance Line Manager. The letter will outline the student's percentage attendance and will state that absences will be assessed on each occasion and may be considered as unauthorised without proof of attendance at a medical establishment. It will also ask if there are any underlying medical reasons or emotional reasons (e.g. close family bereavement) accounting for the absences – support systems can then be put into place. Parents of students who have a pattern of persistent lateness to school will also receive a letter of concern. After this any further lateness may result in an unauthorised absence mark.

8.4 Further unauthorised absence will result in a meeting with the Attendance Officer, parent/carer and the student. Names of these students will be agreed by the Attendance Line Manager. If the situation shows no improvement a referral will be made to Birmingham Fast Track, who may instigate legal proceedings where appropriate.

9. Leave during Term Time (Pupils)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

9.1 The Attendance Officer will send a 'Leave in Term Time' letter to all parents/carers at the start of every academic year to inform them that the Principal is unable to authorise leave during term time except where there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers are informed of the legal implications that could occur if leave without authorisation takes place.

9.2 Parents must complete an 'Exceptional Leave in Term Time Request Form' if they are considering taking their child out of school for a period of leave. These forms can be collected from Reception and must be returned to the Attendance Officer.

9.3 The Attendance Officer will communicate with the Birmingham ELIT if leave has been taken without authorisation. Contact with parents/carers will be made via letters, phone calls and home visits as appropriate.

9.4 Any legal action required will be taken by the Education Legal Intervention Team.

10. TRUANCY:

10.1 Erdington Academy monitor attendance to each lesson period of the school day using the registers, in order to ensure all pupils are safe in school and whereabouts known. If a pupil does not present to scheduled lessons/activities, the Attendance Officer is informed and staff alerted to find missing pupils. If pupils cannot be located and are suspected of leaving school premises, parents will be informed. Heads of Year will investigate the whereabouts during the truanted period and inform the Attendance Officer and the parents/carers of where the student was.

10.2 The first time a student is caught truanting from school and/or lessons, the parent/carer will be informed by telephone and/or letter and the student will be placed on attendance report. Regular spot checks will be carried out to check on the student's future attendance. Students will receive a sanction of internal exclusion.

10.3 If a student is discovered to be truanting for a second time, the above sanctions will apply, and parents/carers invited into school to attend an interview with the student's Head of Year. Students will receive a period of isolation for their second offence. In exceptional circumstances where a student is discovered truanting for a third time, parents and students will be invited to attend a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher and students and parents will be required to agree and sign a contract of attendance. A Erdington Academy Associates Disciplinary Interview may take place if required.

11. Alternative Education Providers

11.1 On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at Erdington Academy.

11.2 Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored and reflected on school registers. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with Erdington Academy.

2. Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

12.1 A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

12.2 All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where

the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

12.3 Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

12.4 Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties

12.5 In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the statutory guidance to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

12.6 All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

12.7 Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME (Children Missing in Education) officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii) of the Statutory guidance 2016.

12.8 This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Use of Attendance Data

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

We will also share attendance information with the Local Authority Attendance Support Team at least termly in line with Working together to improve attendance (2022)