



Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust

Pupil Attendance Policy

Level 2

**Date Adopted: 29th September 2020 (DBAT)
January 2022 (St Peter's Academy)**

History of most recent Policy changes (must be completed)

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation
29 Sept 2020	Appendix 6	Addition of coronavirus guidance	DfE Guidance
10.01.22	Page 7,9	Addition of St. Peter's specific information.	

1) Statement of Principle

In the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust, we believe that attendance and punctuality at our Academies is vital to the wellbeing and future prospects of all our pupils. Attendance and punctuality are intrinsically linked to our Trust's strategy for raising achievement. This policy provides the framework within which all staff, parents, pupils, carers and external agencies can contribute to the development and maintenance of a learning environment where high attendance and excellent punctuality is the "norm".

2) Aims

- To improve the overall percentage attendance and reduce unauthorised absence.
- To reduce the number of students who are persistent absentees (PAs).
- To establish a clear system for maintaining full attendance and excellent punctuality and clearly communicate this to all Trust staff, pupils and parents who are all working to agreed routines and standards;
- To develop a culture for learning environment across the Trust where pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and to be punctual because pupils feel valued members of the Academy community and that they are safe and secure;
- To put in place an effective and efficient administration system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality;
- To offer pupils and parents/carers good support, advice and guidance on the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

3) Objectives

3.1 For Pupils:-

- To ensure that pupils maximise their learning potential by taking responsibility for achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To support their fellow pupils and thereby their Academy in winning awards that relate to attendance and punctuality.
- To follow the Academy procedures for dealing with attendance and punctuality eg, bringing in signed letters from parents after a period of absence or late arrival for the Academy day.

3.2 For Parents and Carers

- To be fully supportive of the Academy with regard to attendance and punctuality as part of signing up to the Home-Academy Agreement.
- To support the Academy and their child(ren) by not requesting absence for holidays during term time and minimising where possible all other authorised absence, for example, dental appointments during the school day.
- To follow the Academy procedures for dealing with attendance through making contact with the Academy on the first day of absence and where this is not

possible, ensuring that they send a signed letter to the Academy when their child returns.

- To read and follow the guide (Appendix 1 Academy Guidance on Attendance for Parents and Carers) for parents/carers which details all our expectations and procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.

3.3 For Teachers/Learning Tutors

- To act as role models by being punctual to every lesson/registration.
- To take the register at the beginning of every lesson/registration period in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- To deal with any unauthorised absence from lessons, monitor the daily attendance statistics and deal with suspected truancy as detailed in this policy.
- To take responsibility for dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality in relation to their class.
- To encourage their pupils and tutees to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality through monitoring and reinforcing the need for high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality.
- To assist in reintegrating any of their pupils after a period of prolonged absence.

3.4 For Senior/Year/Phase Leaders

- To raise the profile of good attendance and monitor the attendance of pupils within their Year/Phase.
- To be responsible for regular liaison with the appropriate lead on Attendance and / or EWO regarding poor attendance of pupils and issues related to poor punctuality.
- To liaise with parents as appropriate in response to attendance, punctuality and truancy issues; attending panel meetings as appropriate.
- To ensure that teachers/ tutors in their Year/Phase fulfil their duties regarding attendance and punctuality and to take appropriate action when this does not occur.
- To ensure that the Academy reward system in relation to attendance and punctuality is used effectively within their Year/Phase.

3.5 Administration Support

- To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Academy's computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality. For example, processing registers, preparing and distributing attendance data.
- To liaise with teachers/senior leaders and establish reasons for absence including telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, letters and arranging home visits.
- To assist in following up poor attendance and punctuality, for example, organising attendance panel meetings with parents/carers and external agencies, arranging home visits, ensuring that pupil contracts and targets are agreed and monitored.

3.6 For the Academy Leadership Team

- Through Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance, to co-ordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the Academy.
- To raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through assemblies, newsletters and appropriate reward systems
- To analyse and act swiftly in response to report data on attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that the learning environment on offer to pupils, through the curriculum, personalised learning, behaviour policy and reintegration procedures, create the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality and low levels of fixed term exclusions.
- To ensure that Academy expectations in regards to this policy on attendance and punctuality is communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

3.7 For the Academy Council

- To regularly review and agree the Attendance and Punctuality Management Policy, in line with this policy.
- To annually agree attendance targets.
- To take a lead role in supporting the Academy in the implementation of its approach to attendance and punctuality especially in our response to parents in supporting unauthorised absence.

4) Absence

Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child(ren) attends the Academy on a regular and full-time basis. Every half day absence has to be classified by the Academy as either authorised or unauthorised. The Academy must record the reason for any half day absence. Unauthorised absence such as truancy will lead to sanctions being taken against pupils or in exceptional cases, extended periods of unauthorised absence may lead to legal action being taken against parents.

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a pupil should miss any lessons is if they are too ill to attend. This is an example of an authorised absence, ie, pupils have missed a morning or afternoon session for a valid reason. Unauthorised absences are those, which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes keeping students away from lessons unnecessarily, truancy and absences, which the Academy considers to have not been properly explained.

The Education (Pupil Regulations) 2006 and the DfES Circular 10/99 state that a leave of absence can only be granted at the discretion of the Academy Council /Principal.

The Academy Council /Principal should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Academy Council /Principal 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 Academy Council / Principal will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Academy Council /Principal's discretion. Only in exceptional cases shall more than ten days be granted in any one year.

5) Procedures for Registration

Each Academy should set out its policy and procedures for registration and ensure that all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the procedures. These should include how to report sickness absence or apply for leave of absence, when a pupil will be marked as 'late' and the consequences of this. (See Appendix 1)

6) Punctuality/Tuancy

It is vitally important that all staff are punctual to ensure that pupils understand that lateness is not acceptable. Senior leaders must reinforce the importance of punctuality and attendance when communicating with pupils and parents.

Procedures for dealing with lateness and truancy are set out in Appendix 1.

7) Strategies for Ensuring High Attendance and Excellent Punctuality

Senior Leaders at each Academy should take overall responsibility for encouraging and rewarding publicly high attendance and excellent levels of punctuality. This will commonly be achieved through assemblies and reward schemes. These may include certificates or other rewards for 100% attendance.

7.2 First Day contact and Dealing with absence

Attempts should be made to contact any parent/carers on the first day of absence and establish the reason for absence. A telephone call can substitute for a note but the authenticity of the caller must be established. Where contact has not been possible, this must be followed up and signed notes should be obtained from parents. Information regarding pupil absence must be recorded against the relevant pupil's record, including any attempts to contact the parent/carers.

A list of all outstanding absences should be regularly reviewed and reasons for absence pursued.

7.3 Attendance Support

Attendance and punctuality should be regularly monitored by senior leaders and the Academy Council .

Where students are likely to have a period of long absence, for example from a period of illness, then arrangements should be made for appropriate work to be sent home and marked when returned. Class teachers should also ensure contact is maintained e.g. through newsletters.

Where there is a significant pattern of absence, the Lead for Attendance should:

- If attendance falls below 85%, a “Persistent Absence, (PA)” attendance meeting, involving parents, in establishing targets for attendance and punctuality along with strategies for support in successfully reintegrating students back into the Academy, providing there are not acceptable known reasons for the absences.
- Students with attendance between 85% and 90% should also be tracked and the appropriate intervention taken, for example, a phone call with parents, if there are not acceptable known reasons for the absences. Patterns should also be analysed to detect any condoned absence or suspected periods of truancy.
- For attendance between 90% - 95%, staff should play an active role in advocating the importance of full attendance to both pupils and parents.
- All steps should be taken to ascertain the student’s whereabouts and documentation should be kept on this process.
- If the attendance is longer than a period of ten continuous days and is treated as unauthorised absence, then Wiltshire Council should be informed.
- The LA must be further informed if the student’s absence is continuous for a further 10 days if whereabouts are unknown and all contact has failed.

In a small minority of cases, referrals may have to be made to the LA, for example, where parents are unwilling and failing to comply with the agreed action plans as a result of a panel meeting. This may lead to the issue of a fixed penalty notice and possible court action being taken if the LA involvement does not lead to the student returning to the Academy.

7.4 Warning Letters and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

The Trust believes that when avenues of supportive intervention such as telephone calls, meetings with parents and any home visits have been used and there has been no improvement in attendance then we will use the legal avenues that are open to us.

7.4.1 Leave of Absence

As stated in Section 4, the Academy does not support any holidays requested during term time. If a request is made for a leave of absence and this is not approved and the student does not attend during the stated period, then a fixed penalty notice could be issued upon the student’s return.

7.4.2 Students with less than 90% attendance (with unauthorised absence)

Students who have less than 90% attendance with any period of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period will receive a warning letter from the Academy. This letter will state the student's overall attendance percentage and that if there is no improvement in attendance, normally within the subsequent 2 week period then a meeting with parents will be arranged.

7.4.3 Late for the Academy day (after registers have closed – use of the U code)

Students who arrive at the Academy after 9.30am are registered as “late after the registers have closed” and this is recorded as a U, which is an unauthorised absence for the am session. Any parent/carer of a student who records more than 5 U codes in any one half-term a meeting will be arranged. This will be preceded by a warning letter to the parent/carer after the 3rd U is recorded in the Academy register informing of the consequences of reaching a 5th U in the register.

7.5 Reintegration Programmes

If a student has had a period of absence for longer than five days, then the class teacher tutor may instigate the reintegration programme. This will involve the class teacher supporting their pupil in reintegrating back into Academy life. It will involve a series of support meetings initiated by a first meeting that explains the programme to students, discusses subject issues and sets agreed targets. This is then developed through further support meetings over a period of two weeks after the date of return. The completed form will then be placed in the student's file. The form is in Appendix 3.

7.6 Reintegration through the Guidance manager

Following a period of prolonged absence, a student will be referred to the EWO or other appropriate person depending on the level of support required. A meeting will take place with the parent/carer and student to discuss a reintegration programme. Consideration will be given to a reduced timetable initially to ensure a smooth reintegration.

8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Senior Leaders of the Academy will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through analysis of attendance data and reports. Patterns of lateness or absence should be identified and action plans generated. These could include reviewing any related policies and procedures such as Student Voice/Council in working with students to generate strategies to improve punctuality. Comparisons will be made across the Trust and where appropriate actions to improve attendance and/or punctuality will feature in Academy Improvement Plans.

Appendix 1: St Peter's Academy Procedures

Procedures

In-school Procedures

- The classroom doors are open on a staggered basis, at either 8:45, 8:50 or 8:55
- Registers will be taken by a member of staff (usually the class teacher) and entered into SIMS (online register). Children who are absent, but the reason is unknown will be entered as 'N' on the register.
- Children arriving more than 10 minutes after their doors open should report to the school office by way of the front door. They will be recorded as late arrivals by a member of the office staff. (AC)
- Children who arrive later than 9:30am will be recorded as having an unauthorized absence for the morning session. (AC)
- If children are unaccounted for at 9:30am, the office team will phone parents (after checking with the class teacher and the 'Pupil entry/exit during the school day book'). If still no contact can be made by second registration (1:15pm), the school will conduct a house visit or contact the MASH team.
- Pupils who are marked as absent on the register, and no reason has been given, will be contacted by telephone. If no telephone contact is possible then a letter/email will be sent.
- If pupils are absent from school for more than 5 consecutive days without contacting the school, then the Education Welfare Service will be contacted.
- If a pupil's absence record is erratic, or if a pupil is persistently late, then the school will contact the parents and/or also ask the Parent Support Adviser to make contact with the family.

Home-school Procedures

- Parents of children who are going to be absent from school, should contact the school office before 9.00am either by telephone, by email or in person. An answer phone will record messages out of school hours, or if there is no one available to take calls.
- Parents are requested to notify the school office of medical or dental appointments verbally or in writing, prior to the date of the appointment. If an emergency appointment is needed, they should contact the school by telephone in the morning as previously mentioned.
- Parents are requested to notify the school of circumstances that are likely to affect their child's attendance at school.

Absence during Term Time

In s444A and s444B Education Act 1996 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the **Department for Education** states; every day at school counts enormously and so does every consecutive day attended by pupils. Pupils need to be able to absorb new facts and knowledge, acquire new skills and consolidate before building further and progressing. They simply cannot do so if their structured school terms are disrupted by too many preventable absences.

We follow the Wiltshire Guidance for Schools. Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests for Leave of Absence

A request for a leave of absence must only be considered if;

- The parent the child normally lives with applies in advance for the absence; and
- There are exceptional circumstances for the absence

If the parent with whom the child normally lives does not apply for the absence this would be considered as an unauthorised absence and this parent would be liable to the issue of a Penalty Notice. Absence cannot be authorised if anybody else applies for the holiday.

What is unauthorised absence?

- A parent has made a request to a school for a absence in term time and this has not been agreed by the school;
- A parent has not applied for an absence in advance (the regulations do not allow retrospective approval)

In what circumstances could an absence be authorised?

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Head teachers should examine each case on its merits before making a decision and should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. A request for leave of absence could be considered exceptional in the following circumstance;

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking leave of absence outside term time at any point in the academic year;
- The terminal illness or bereavement of a parent or sibling if the absence is concurrent.

The overriding principle should be that the absence ought not to be authorised if it will have a detrimental effect on the child's education.

Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence

If the absence has not been authorised by the school and an absence occurs, where the child's total unauthorised absences amounts to 10 or more sessions (5 school days), continuous or aggregated within the previous six months within the current academic year (including the most recent unauthorised absence), schools are expected to notify the Education Welfare Service.

Who receives a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child named on the notification. In all cases this will be the parent with whom the child lives. For absent parents, step-parents or partners it may be helpful to consider the following:

- Who the child was with at the time of the absence?
- Was the absent parent aware of the absence?
- Has the school sent a letter of refusal to all concerned?
- Does the absent parent have regular contact or live nearby?

Any other absence?

There may be other circumstances when a parent may request an absence for their child, which may involve some time away from home. Examples of these include:

- The wedding of a family member
- Family bereavement
- Prison visits

Schools should consider each request individually taking the following into account:

- The nature of the event for which leave is sought;
- Its frequency (is it a one-off or likely to become a regular occurrence?);
- Whether the parent has given advance notice; and
- The pupil's overall attendance

Consideration should also be given to whether the family will need to travel during the absence.

In some cultures, specific religious occasions are very important (for example a child's first communion) and the family may want to return to their country of origin to celebrate this with family. Again, consideration should be given as to whether or not the absence is authorised due to 'exceptional circumstances'.

Medical treatment abroad

Some families return to their country of origin for medical or dental treatment for a number of reasons. In most cases doctors will provide a letter stating that a child has an appointment or is undergoing medical treatment. Consideration should be given to how long it would be reasonable to allow for travel.

Missing children and children missing education

Staff report immediately to the D/DSL, if they know of any child who may be:

- Missing – whereabouts unknown or
- Missing education – (compulsory school age (5-16) with no school place and not electively home educated)

The designated teacher for LAC discusses any unauthorised/unexplained absence of Looked After Children with Virtual School when required.

The DSL shares any unauthorised/unexplained absence of children who have an allocated social worker within 24 hours.

Children who do not attend school regularly can be at increased risk of abuse and neglect. Where there is unauthorised/unexplained absence, and

- after reasonable attempts have been made to contact the family without success, the DSL follows the SVPP procedure and consults/refers to the MASH team as appropriate.
- there are no known welfare concerns about a pupil, we follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and report concerns to the Education Welfare Service.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Attendance is monitored regularly.

Administrative Staff:

- Check registers daily for unauthorised absence on SIMS 'Attendance Manager'.
- Following weekly checks of electronic system, bring irregularities or concerns to the attention of the head teacher who will follow agreed procedures
- Produce an annual analysis of attendance for governors

Academy Council Member

- Review attendance figures annually.
- Assess training/resource implication.

Appendix Two – Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings
For use with the am and pm roll call.

Code	Description	Statistical meaning	Physical meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole school
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole school
@	Do not use	Unauthorised Absence LATE FOR SESSIONS	
B	Educated off site	Approved educational Activity	Out for the whole session
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
D	Dual registration	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
F	Extended family holiday agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
H	Family Holiday agreed	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence	Out for the whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
L	Late	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	Out for the whole session
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
S	Study Leave	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised absences	Out for the whole session
U	Late after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	Late for session

V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
X	DCSF: School closed to Students	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
Z	Do NOT USE	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
!	DCSF X: Non-compulsory school age abs	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
#	School closed to Students and staff	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
*	DCSF Z: Student not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for the whole session
-	All should attend/ No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session

Appendix Three – Example Reintegration Form After Prolonged Absence

Student Name and Home Group			
Phase Leader		Guidance Manager	
Date of First Absence		Date of Return to the Academy	
Details of outstanding work	brief outline of the work missed:		
Targets (including priorities) set with students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 		
Meeting 1	Outcomes		
Meeting 2 5 days later	Outcomes		
Meeting 3 10 days later	Outcomes		
Meeting 3 15 days later	Outcomes		

Guidance Manager's Signature _____ **Student signature** _____

EWO's Signature _____ **Parent/Carer's signature** _____

Appendix 4 Example Application for Leave of Absence

Please read the following information before you complete the request.

As you are aware it is the policy of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust not to allow any holiday or extended leave during term time. However, if you wish to request leave of absence you need to read the following advice and complete the form below.

This form must be completed as early as possible before the requested leave of absence.

Each request for absence will be considered individually and we will take into account:

- The student's previous attendance history;
- The time of the year regards any public or internal examinations;
- Attendance and punctuality in the current academic year;
- The nature of the request and whether any other requests have been made.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued should a student take leave of absence without permission.

Full Name of Student:

Class:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Reason for request for leave of absence:

Intended dates of absence:

Name of parent/carers:

Signature:

Date:

For Office Use only:

Form to be submitted to Principal along with Attendance Certificate

Agreement given Yes/No

Appropriate letter to be prepared for return to parent/carers and given to Vice Principal for signature.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 5 HOW MUCH SCHOOLING HAVE YOU MISSED?

100% ATTENDANCE MEANS THAT YOU HAVE BEEN IN SCHOOL EVERY DAY OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

99% = 2 days missed of the school year (4 sessions missed)

98% = 4 days missed of the school year (8 sessions missed)

97% = 6 days missed of the school year (over 1 school week)

96% = 8 days missed of the school year (16 sessions missed)

95% = 10 days missed of the school year (2 school weeks)

94% = 12 days missed of the school year (24 sessions missed)

93% = 14 days missed of the school year (28 sessions missed)

92% = 16 days missed of the school year (over 3 school weeks)

91% = 18 days missed of the school year (36 sessions missed)

90% = 20 days missed of the school year (4 school weeks)

89% = 22 days missed of the school year (44 sessions missed)

88% = 24 days missed of the school year (48 sessions missed)

87% = 26 days missed of the school year (over 5 school weeks)

86% = 28 days missed of the school year (56 sessions missed)

85% = 30 days missed of the school year (6 school weeks)

70% = 1½ days missed per week (12 weeks missed per year)

60% = 2 days missed per week (2 days missed almost 4 months)

50% = 2½ days missed per week (19 weeks missed)

40% = 3 days missed per week (19 weeks = over ½ a school year missed)

Appendix 6

Updates from DfE relevant to attendance due to COVID-19

In March, when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was increasing, DfE made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Schools will work with families to secure regular school attendance from the start of term as this will be essential to help pupils catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.

Schools will:

- Communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the summer ahead of the new school year.

- Identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with the school regularly during the pandemic.
- Use the additional catch-up funding schools will receive, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils' regular attendance.
- Work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.

Guidance on full school opening

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#attendance>