

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1 Aims

Students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind. Students with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

South Axholme Academy promotes attendance to ensure learners are safe and as part of ongoing safeguarding.

By attending South Axholme Academy, students have the opportunity to meet their educational outcomes, have supportive adults in their lives and are able to share any concerns they have with staff who have a genuine interest in their development.

The government expects schools and local authorities to: -

Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence

Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and to act early to address patterns of absence

The government expects parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their child/children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school attend regularly. Similarly, they expect all students to be punctual to their lessons.

South Axholme Academy strives to do this by:

- Contacting parents on the first day of absence to ensure both parents and students know someone cares when they miss school, and to ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken. This may not always happen if a parent/carer contacts the academy in the first instance
- Ensuring all classrooms are nurturing and engaging, so students want to come to school every day
- Accurately collecting attendance data and inputting this carefully into student data systems to allow calculation and analysis of this data; to track and identify patterns of absence and good attendance for students
- Focusing on a holistic, collaborative approach partnering with families, community groups and specialist services to develop and address attendance challenges affecting students
- Educating parents and students about the importance of attendance
- Implementing a school-wide system of incentives and rewards for good attendance
- Reaching out to students who are frequently absent to find out in a supportive manner why they are missing school and what would help them attend more regularly

2 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

In accordance with the law, South Axholme Academy has an admission register and an attendance register. All students are placed on both registers.

The admission register holds the personal details of every student in the academy, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the academy, information about parents and carers and details of the school last attended. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register includes: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry in the admission registers and attendance register is preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governors

The Governors are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the academy's policies and ethos
- Making sure the leaders of the academy fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the academy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the local authority consider the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Chris Barnes and can be contacted via the academy telephone number which is 01427 872121.

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and regular reporting to the Principal
- Working with the local authority through a multi-disciplinary approach to tackle all absence, including persistent and severe absence

3.4 Class Teachers/Assistant Teachers

Class Teachers / Assistant Teachers are responsible for reporting attendance. They will do this by informing the school office of students' attendance through a daily register. Attendance is recorded officially twice a day. This will be done at the start of the school day and once during the afternoon session. Internal registers are taken every lesson.

3.5 The Academy Attendance Team

Attendance staff will:

- Record the attendance of students using the appropriate code at the time of reporting

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record appropriately
- Contact the parents/carers of a student if they are absent from the academy without advanced notification from parents/carers of the absence

Attendance is electronically recorded using our MIS system

3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure that they meet their legal obligation to ensure their child/children attend the academy every day, on time and that they are equipped to learn
- Call the academy to report their child's absence before 8.40am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than one emergency contact number for their child and keep such details up to date on the academy's MIS system, Arbor
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.7 Students

Students are expected to attend the academy every day and on time

4 Children at Risk of Missing Education

South Axholme Academy informs the appropriate local authority of any student who is going to be removed from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g., elective home education
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the student is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period
- Have been permanently excluded.
- The local authority is notified in advance of the deletion, when the academy becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

5 Home Educated Children

On receipt of appropriate written notification to home educate, South Axholme Academy informs the local authority that the student is to be removed from the admission register. There is no requirement for parents/carers to obtain the academy's or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education, but this does not have to be at a school.

6 Contents of the Attendance Register

6.1 General Information

South Axholme Academy will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register. The attendance register will be completed at the start of the first session (morning) of each school day and once during the second session (afternoon). It will mark whether every student is:

- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The academy follows up any absences to ascertain the reason and to ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken. It will be identified whether the absence is approved or not and the correct code will be used before entering it on to the academy's electronic register, or MIS system which is used to download data to the school census.

National codes are used to enable the academy to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the school census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence.

South Axholme Academy will also record whether the absence is authorised or not; it is at the principal's discretion if an absence is authorised or not.

Students must arrive in school by 8.38am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will close at 09.30am. The register for the second session will be taken in the afternoon. Students arriving at other times of the day may be marked present if this is part of an agreed plan for example - at the request of a medical practitioner.

6.2 Unplanned Absence

The student's parents/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

Parents/carers should report absence to the academy on 01427 872121, selecting 'option 1' or by emailing admin@southaxholme-iet.co.uk

The academy will mark absence due to illness as 'authorised' unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy may ask the student's parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. This may also be via the ATTEND framework.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this. This is at the discretion of the principal not that of the parent/carer.

6.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the student's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

Parents and carers should request leave of absence by calling the academy office and selecting 'option 1', or by emailing admin@southaxholme-iet.co.uk (marking in the subject - Absence).

However, parents/carers are encouraged and requested to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of education for the minimum amount of time necessary and should attend before and after the appointment.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 7 provides more information about which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

6.4 Lateness and Punctuality

The Academy day starts at 8.40am and students should be on site by 8.38am. A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as authorised late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as unauthorised late, using the appropriate code

Students who are identified as being persistently late will receive sanctions such as detentions, and a meeting called with parents to discuss reasons for lateness and how this can be rectified. Persistent lateness may result in the issuing of a penalty notice where parents/carers will be subject to a monetary fine issue by the local authority.

6.5 Following up an Unexplained Absence

Where any student who is expected to attend the academy but does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the academy will:

- Contact the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the academy may attempt a home visit to safeguard the student
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session

- Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken. If absence continues, the academy will utilise a multi-disciplinary approach and involve local authority partners in order to improve attendance for the student via the ATTEND framework.

6.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. If a child's attendance becomes a concern within the academy, parents will be contacted via letter and email requesting a meeting to discuss any potential patterns and concerns. We will look to implement attendance support and review the ATTEND framework

7 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

7.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually considering the specific facts, circumstances, evidence and relevant context behind the request.

A request for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday is unlikely to be authorised.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, at least two weeks before the absence. In accordance with any leave of absence request, the principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised** absence include:

- **Religious observance** – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parent/carer belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parent/carer's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- **Traveller status** - travelling for occupational purposes. This covers Roma, English and Welsh Romani people, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- **Study leave**
- **Part time timetables** and transitions should be in accordance with the local authority's part-time timetable and integration policy, and only in exceptional circumstances. It will be time limited and regularly reviewed
- **Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** requirements

7.2 Legal Sanctions

The academy or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the student is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices are issued by the local authority on behalf of the school/academy and the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as unauthorised holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where a suspended/excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment remains unpaid after 28 days, the local authority will issue legal proceedings against the parents/carers.

8 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Staff at the academy are committed to promoting and achieving good levels of attendance in accordance with the academy's attendance policy. Underpinning this commitment is a belief that only if students attend school regularly, can they take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

In addition, the academy promotes an environment where students feel safe and valued.

At South Axholme Academy, we celebrate positive attendance with rewards, incentives and celebrations.

9 Attendance Monitoring

9.1 General Information

The academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly, and yearly across the academy and at an individual student level
- Identify whether there are groups of or individual students whose absences may be a cause for concern

Attendance is a standing item on the agenda at Senior Leadership Team meetings and students or groups of students who are cause for concern are discussed and a plan is put into action. Monitoring takes place as part of a whole school priority and starts within the classroom itself.

The academy will monitor itself against local, regional and national data regularly and take action to improve attendance where needed.

The academy will regularly feedback to the governing body its attendance data and actions taken to ensure attendance remains a key focus and priority for the whole school.

9.2 Analysing Attendance

The Academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The Academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to all teaching staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families at the earliest opportunity in line with the ATTEND Framework
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings and work alongside parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school and ensure students are accessing the education to which they are entitled
- Offer Early Help Support and other attendance support such as the ATTEND framework to support better school attendance
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

9.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a learner misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more of school.

The Academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings and work alongside parents of students, who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school and ensure students are accessing the education to which they are entitled. This will be in line with the ATTEND framework.

- Offer Early Help support and other attendance support to promote better school attendance
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

10 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually by the SLT (Senior Leadership Team). The policy will be approved by the board of governors.

11 Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Achievement and Behaviour Policy

12 Different Term Dates for Different Students

Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g., for 'staggered starts' or 'induction days'.

The code # is used to record where the year group(s) is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the academy ensures that those students not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

13 Punctuality

Punctuality is very important, and all students must be on the academy site by 8.38am.

Being 1 minute late is still late and it is important that as an academy we encourage students to be punctual as we know this will help them when they progress into the world of work. Please also see appendices regarding the academy's approach to students arriving late.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1-Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can the academy place my child on a part-time timetable?

A. As a rule, no. All students at compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a student's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the academy has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will record it as authorised absence.

Q. Are students entitled to study leave?

A. No. Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, and study leave should only ever be granted to students in Year 11. If the academy does decide to grant study leave, provision will still be made available for those students who want to continue to come into school to revise.

All students are different and have different requirements and preferences when preparing for examinations. Some schools do seek alternatives to study leave as they recognise that some students do not have the skills or are not inclined to make the best use of unsupervised and unstructured revision time. However, many schools also recognise that study leave is a chance for students to develop their independent study which will help them when they move to post-16 provision, where a self-study approach is commonly used.

Year 11 students granted study leave will be marked on the attendance register as authorised absence using code (S). No other attendance code is suitable for the purpose of study leave. Year 11 students who are 16 years old are of compulsory school age (up to the last Friday in June) and must be marked on the attendance register accordingly.

Q. Can a school use a designated school day as an academic review day for parents?

A. No. Academic review days should not be used as part of the school day. Schools should endeavour to hold these reviews out of school hours.

Q. Do schools need to consult parents if making changes to the school day?

A. No. Although parents must be informed of the changes, there is no legal requirement to consult parents or to give an explanation as to why the decision has been made. Of course, schools can consult parents if they wish to, and where they have raised the expectation that they will consult, they should honour that commitment.

Q. Can a parent take their child on holiday during term time?

A. Principals should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a principal grants a leave request, it will be for the principal to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Q. Does the change to the regulation on leave of absence affect Child performers?

A. The amendments made to regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 on leave of absence do not affect the section that allows the parent of a student performer to seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. The amendments affect section 3 and 4 of regulation 7, which relate to leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 2 of Regulation 7 (which has not been amended) still enables a principal to grant leave of absence for a student to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.

Legislation sets out that a local authority license must be obtained before a student can take part in a performance. Where the license specifies the dates that a student is to be away from school to perform, then the principal should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the principal to authorise a leave of absence. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the principal to authorise a leave of absence. Principals should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a license, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a student's education.

Appendix 2- Lates procedure

First lateness to school	Stage 1 warning recorded
Second lateness to school	Stage 2 recorded and lunch detention on the same day
Third lateness to school	Stage 3 recorded and a full lunch time detention set
Each subsequent lateness	Stage 3 recorded and a full lunch time detention set

This procedure will reset at the end of each half term. Academy staff withhold the right to decide what is an appropriate reason for being late.

Appendix 3: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Learner is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Learner arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Learner is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Learner is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Learner has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Learner is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Learner is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Learner is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Learner has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Learner has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a learner will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 learner is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Romani, Roma, and traveller absence	Learner from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Learner is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Learner is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for learner's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Learner arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
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X	Not required to be in school	Learner of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or learner is in custody
Z	Learner not on admission register	Register set up but learner has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Public

IET reserves the right to make amendments to this policy at any time without notice.

End