

Attendance Policy

SOUTH AXHOLME ACADEMY



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1 Introduction

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

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,

Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

All students to be punctual to their lessons.

South Axholme Academy:

Contacts parents on the first day of absence to ensure both parents and students know someone cares when they miss school and ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken. This may not always happen if a parent/carer contacts the academy in the first instance.

Aims to ensure all classrooms are nurturing and engaging so students want to come to school every day.

Invests in accurate collection and entry of attendance data into student data systems.

Calculates and analyses absence and good attendance to discern patterns for students.

Focuses on a holistic, collaborative approach partnering with families, community groups and specialist services to develop and address attendance challenges affecting students.

Aims to educate parents and students about the importance of attendance.

Implements a school-wide system of incentives and rewards for good attendance.

Reaches out to frequently absent students to find out in a supportive manner why they are missing school and what would help them attend more regularly.

2 Admission & Attendance Registers

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 contains the personal details of every student in the academy, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the academy, information regarding 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 register and attendance register is preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

3 Children at Risk of Missing Education

South Axholme Academy informs their local authority of any student who is going to be deleted 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. 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; or,

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.

4 Home Educated Children

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

5 Contents of Attendance Register

An attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion it is recorded whether every student is:

Present;

Attending an approved educational activity;

Absent; or,

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school follows up any absences to:

Ascertain the reason;

Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;

Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,

Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the academy's electronic register, or management information 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.

6 Present at School

Students are not marked present if they are not in school during registration. If a student leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Registers are kept open for a reasonable length of time but not kept open for the whole session.

A student arriving after the register has closed is marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a student is taking part in a supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Students can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the academy and supervised by someone authorised by the academy. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when students are present at an approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code is used when students are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the academy. The academy is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students educated off-site. By using code B, the academy certifies that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard students. This code is not used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a student is at home doing school work. The provider of the alternative activity notifies the academy of any absences by individual students. The academy records the student's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of students at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the student was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are students who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the student is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. The academy only records the student's attendance and absence for those sessions that the student is scheduled to attend the academy. The academy has in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code is used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. The academy needs to be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code is used to record the sessions when a student is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the academy and supervised by someone authorised by the academy.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code is 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.

Code W: Work experience

If any student is provided with work experience in the final two years of compulsory education, arrangements will be made for the work experience placement provider to notify the academy of any absences by individual students. Any absence will be recorded using the relevant code.

7 Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when students are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the academy

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The academy considers each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a student to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they are marked absent in the attendance register using Code E.

Alternative provision is arranged for each excluded student from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made this is marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the academy

The Principal will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the 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 Principal will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Parents should notify the academy on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. The academy will authorise absences due to illness unless there is a genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the academy will request parents provide medical evidence to support illness. The academy will record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but will advise parents of their intention to only authorise absences if medical evidence is provided. The academy will not request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

The academy treats 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, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Study leave is recorded as authorised absence. Study leave is used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 students during public examinations. Provision will still be made available for those students who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code 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 is 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 student is attending educational provision. It is not 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 school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

8 Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where the academy is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the academy or in excess of the period determined by the Principal.

If the academy does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

The academy follows up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort is made to establish the reason for a student's absence. When the reason for the student's absence has been established the register is amended. This code will not be left on a student's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it is replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the academy is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

The academy actively discourages late arrival, monitors patterns of late arrival and seeks an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code is used where a student is unable to attend because:

The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or The transport provided by the academy or a local authority is not available and where the student's home is not within walking distance; or A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the student from attending school.

The student is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the academy has evidence from the place of custody that the student is attending educational activities then the academy will record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Student not on admission register

This code is used to set up registers in advance of students joining the academy to ease administration burdens. The academy puts students on the admission register from the first day that the academy has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the academy.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code is used for whole or partial school 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 schools as polling stations.

9 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'. Code # is used to record the year group(s) that 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.

10 Frequently Asked Questions

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

As a rule, no. All students of 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.

Are students entitled to study leave?

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.

How will the academy record the attendance of my child whilst on study leave?

Y11 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. Y11 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.

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

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

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

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.

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

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, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

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

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 child 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 licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Where the license specifies the dates that a child 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 leave of absence. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the Principal to

authorise leave of absence. Principals should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a child's education.

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

New attendance codes - Schools must report separate codes for students impacted by COVID 19. These codes are updated regularly and adopted by the academy as a matter of course.

11 Document Control

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