

Attendance policy

South Axholme Academy 26-27



Policy publication date:	09/26
Policy agreed by full governing body:	
Policy review date:	09/27
Designated Senior Leader for attendance:	Chris Barnes
Attendance Officer:	Chris Barnes

Contents

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	4
4. Recording attendance	7
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	10
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	11
7. Supporting students who are absent or returning to Academy.....	14
8. Attendance monitoring	14
9. Removing Children from the Academy Roll.....	15
10. Monitoring arrangements.....	16
10. Links with other policies.....	16
Appendix 1: attendance codes	18

1. Aims

This policy sets out the Academy's approach to attendance and punctuality and demonstrates the Academy's commitment to meeting its statutory responsibilities.

The policy has been developed with regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Working together to improve school attendance**, including the current version applicable from 2026, and the relevant school attendance regulations.

The Academy recognises that regular attendance is essential to ensuring that every student can access their full-time education and achieve positive educational, social and personal outcomes.

Our aims are to:

- set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all students;
- promote the importance and benefits of good attendance;
- reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- identify and address attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity;
- understand and address barriers that may prevent students from attending regularly;
- work positively and constructively with students and their families;
- provide appropriate support where attendance is affected by individual circumstances;
- ensure that attendance is monitored accurately and consistently;
- safeguard the welfare of students who are absent or whose whereabouts are unknown; and
- promote punctuality in attending the Academy and individual lessons.

The Academy recognises that absence is often a symptom of wider circumstances or difficulties. Attendance concerns will therefore be considered alongside the individual needs and circumstances of the student.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Working together to improve school attendance**, as updated in July 2026.

The policy also has regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996;
- Education Act 2002;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations, as amended;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance;

- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- School census guidance; and
- relevant local authority attendance and penalty notice procedures.

The Academy will keep this policy under review and amend it where necessary to reflect changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local authority procedures.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- setting high expectations for Academy leaders, staff, students and parents/carers;
- ensuring that Academy leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities relating to attendance;
- ensuring that attendance is recorded accurately and required information is shared with the Department for Education and local authority;
- ensuring the Academy works effectively with local partners to remove barriers to attendance;
- recognising and promoting the importance of good attendance throughout the Academy's policies and ethos;
- ensuring attendance management processes are implemented effectively;
- ensuring appropriate support is provided to students who require additional assistance;
- ensuring the Academy has high aspirations for all students while adapting processes and support to individual needs;
- regularly reviewing attendance data and challenging Academy leaders where appropriate;
- working with Academy leaders to set attendance priorities and improvement goals;
- monitoring attendance across the Academy and evaluating the effectiveness of attendance strategies;
- ensuring appropriate action is taken where attendance is a concern;
- ensuring staff receive appropriate training in attendance procedures; and

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- implementing this policy;
- monitoring Academy-level attendance and absence data;
- reporting attendance information to governors;
- supporting staff with monitoring individual student attendance;
- monitoring the impact of attendance strategies;
- ensuring appropriate attendance interventions are implemented;
- authorising appropriate leave of absence in accordance with statutory requirements;
- issuing penalty notices where appropriate, or authorising an appropriate senior leader to do so in accordance with the relevant local authority code of conduct;
- working with parents/carers of students with SEND to develop appropriate attendance support;

- communicating with the local authority where required, including in relation to students with an Education, Health and Care Plan where attendance is falling or barriers to attendance relate to the student's needs; and
- communicating the Academy's expectations regarding attendance and punctuality to students and parents/carers.

3.3 Designated Senior Leader for Attendance

The Designated Senior Leader for Attendance is responsible for:

- leading, championing and improving attendance across the Academy;
- setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- ensuring attendance processes are implemented consistently;
- monitoring attendance and absence data;
- analysing patterns and trends in attendance;
- ensuring appropriate interventions are identified and implemented;
- establishing effective systems for identifying and responding to absence;
- liaising with students, parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate;
- building positive relationships with parents/carers;
- creating attendance intervention or reintegration plans where appropriate;
- ensuring appropriate support is offered to students and families; and
- overseeing welfare and attendance checks where concerns arise.

3.4 Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data;
- identifying patterns requiring further investigation;
- benchmarking attendance data where appropriate;
- providing regular attendance reports to Academy staff;
- reporting attendance concerns to the Designated Senior Leader for Attendance and Principal;
- following up unexplained absence;
- working with education welfare and local authority attendance services where appropriate; and
- advising the Principal or authorised senior leader where a penalty notice or other formal attendance intervention may be appropriate.

3.5 Class teacher/form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for:

- accurately recording attendance for morning and afternoon sessions;

- using the appropriate national attendance codes;
- submitting attendance information in accordance with Academy procedures;
- identifying concerns regarding individual students' attendance or punctuality; and
- communicating relevant concerns to the appropriate member of staff.

3.6 Academy Administrative staff

Academy administration staff will:

- receive and record calls and communications from parents/carers regarding absence;
- update attendance records where appropriate;
- support the Academy's first-day response to unexplained absence;
- contact parents/carers where a student has not arrived as expected;
- request reasons for absence;
- ensure information is passed to the appropriate member of the Academy's attendance or safeguarding team; and

Where a student is expected to attend but has not arrived and the Academy has not received an explanation, the Academy will make appropriate enquiries with parents/carers and emergency contacts.

3.7 Parents

For the purposes of this policy, a parent/carer means the adult the Academy and/or local authority considers most appropriate to work with, including those with parental responsibility and those with day-to-day care of the student.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends every timetabled session and arrives on time;
- notify the Academy of absence before the register opens, or as soon as reasonably practicable;
- provide the reason for absence and expected date of return;
- provide appropriate emergency contact details;
- make medical and dental appointments outside Academy hours where reasonably possible;
- provide appropriate information or evidence where reasonably requested;
- engage positively with support offered by the Academy or local authority; and
- seek support from the Academy where barriers are affecting their child's attendance.

3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- attend every timetabled session;
- arrive at the Academy and lessons on time;
- engage positively with attendance support;
- speak to an appropriate member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties that are affecting their attendance; and
- follow the Academy's procedures for attendance and punctuality.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The Academy will maintain an electronic attendance register for all students.

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of the first session and once during the second session of each school day, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes.

The register will record whether each student is:

- present;
- attending an approved educational activity;
- absent; or
- unable to attend because of exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will retain:

- 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 making the amendment.

The Academy will retain attendance register information for the required statutory period.

Registers will be taken at the times published by the Academy and will remain open for no longer than the maximum period permitted by statutory guidance.

Students arriving after the start of a session will be recorded in accordance with the appropriate attendance code.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate for students with individual attendance plans, SEND, medical needs or other identified circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The register for the first and second sessions will be taken at the time published on the Academy website and will be kept open until 30 minutes after the session begins.

Students arriving at other times of the day may be marked present if this is part of an agreed plan, for example as part of a student's EHCP or at the request of a medical practitioner.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the Academy of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day of absence before the register opens, or as soon as practically possible.

The Academy will normally authorise absence due to genuine illness where appropriate.

Where there are reasonable concerns about the nature, frequency or authenticity of an illness, the Academy may request appropriate supporting information or evidence. Such evidence will not be requested unnecessarily.

Where the Academy has reasonable grounds to conclude that an absence is not due to genuine illness, the Academy may record the absence as unauthorised and will communicate this decision to the parent/carer.

4.3 Planned absence

Parents/carers should notify the Academy in advance of planned appointments or other circumstances that may affect attendance.

Medical and dental appointments will be recorded using the appropriate attendance code and will normally be authorised where the circumstances meet the relevant statutory requirements.

Where possible, appointments should be arranged outside Academy hours. Where this is not possible, students should attend the Academy before and/or after the appointment wherever reasonably practicable.

Requests for leave of absence during term time must be made to the Academy as far in advance as possible

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at the Academy and attend lessons on time.

Registers will be open for the period specified by the Academy and will not remain open beyond the maximum period permitted by statutory guidance.

A student who arrives after the start of a session but before the register closes will be recorded using the appropriate late code.

A student arriving after the register has closed will normally be recorded as absent using the appropriate code, unless another attendance code applies.

The Academy may contact parents/carers where lateness becomes a pattern and may arrange a meeting to identify and address the reasons for lateness.

Where a student has an agreed attendance plan or reasonable adjustment, the appropriate attendance code will be used.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where a student who is expected to attend does not attend and no explanation has been received, the Academy will make appropriate enquiries.

These may include:

- contacting the parent/carer on the first day of unexplained absence;
- contacting emergency contacts where appropriate;
- establishing the reason for absence;
- determining whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised;
- recording the appropriate attendance code as soon as the reason is established;
- maintaining contact with the family where the absence continues;
- considering whether the student requires additional support;
- considering safeguarding concerns;
- contacting relevant professionals where appropriate; and
- making referrals to wider services or the local authority where necessary.

Where the Academy is unable to establish the whereabouts or welfare of a student, the Academy may undertake further enquiries, including a home visit, in accordance with section 4.6 of this policy.

4.6 Home visits and welfare checks

The Academy reserves the right, **at its discretion**, to undertake a home visit where a student has been absent for several days and the Academy has been unable to establish their welfare, whereabouts or a satisfactory reason for their continued absence.

A home visit may also be considered where:

- repeated attempts to contact the family have been unsuccessful;
- there are concerns regarding the student's welfare;
- the pattern or length of absence gives rise to concern;
- the Academy considers that a face-to-face discussion would assist in understanding barriers to attendance; or
- the Academy believes that a home visit may assist in supporting the student to return to education.

A home visit is primarily a **welfare and support check**. It is intended to establish that the student is safe and well, understand any barriers affecting attendance, and identify what support the Academy may be able to provide to help the student return to school as quickly as possible.

A home visit will not automatically indicate that the family is subject to formal attendance enforcement.

The Academy will approach home visits sensitively and respectfully and will consider the individual circumstances of the student and family.

Where a home visit identifies a safeguarding concern, the Academy will follow its safeguarding procedures and make referrals to the appropriate agencies where necessary.

Where the Academy is unable to establish the student's whereabouts or has reason to believe that the student may be at immediate risk of harm, the Academy will take appropriate safeguarding action, including contacting the relevant emergency or statutory services where necessary.

4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The Academy will regularly communicate attendance and absence information to parents/carers.

Where attendance becomes a concern, the Academy will contact the parent/carer and may request a meeting to discuss:

- the student's attendance;
- patterns of absence or lateness;
- any barriers affecting attendance;
- support that may be available;
- actions that can be taken by the Academy and family; and
- any further intervention that may be appropriate.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant leave of absence during term time where the request meets the specific circumstances permitted by the relevant school attendance regulations.

Leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time authorised.

The Academy will consider each request individually, taking account of the circumstances and relevant background information.

Parents/carers should submit requests as early as possible and, where practicable, at least two weeks before the requested absence.

The Academy may request supporting information or evidence where appropriate.

Family holidays during term time will not normally be authorised.

Leave of absence will not normally be granted for a student to participate in protest activity during school hours.

5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Authorised absence may include, where the relevant statutory requirements are met:

- illness, including mental health-related illness;
- medical or dental appointments;
- religious observance;
- circumstances covered by the relevant statutory attendance codes;
- absence relating to a student who meets the relevant criteria for a mobile child;
- absence resulting from suspension or exclusion where no alternative provision has been made; and
- other circumstances specifically permitted by legislation or statutory guidance.

5.3 Absence from the Academy site that is not recorded as absence

Some activities are not recorded as absence where they meet the relevant statutory requirements.

These may include:

- approved off-site educational activities;
- school trips and visits;
- approved sporting activities;
- attendance at another school where the student is dual registered;
- provision arranged by the local authority;
- approved work experience; and
- other circumstances permitted under the national attendance regulations, including certain unavoidable circumstances affecting attendance.

The Academy will use the appropriate attendance code for each circumstance.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Academy is committed to promoting and achieving high levels of attendance.

We recognise that good attendance is supported by positive relationships, a safe and welcoming environment, effective teaching and learning, early identification of barriers and appropriate support.

The Academy will:

- promote the importance of regular attendance;
- communicate attendance expectations clearly;
- recognise and celebrate positive attendance;
- monitor attendance regularly;
- identify patterns of absence and lateness;
- provide support where barriers are identified;
- work constructively with families;
- provide appropriate pastoral support;
- work with external agencies where appropriate; and
- use attendance information to inform wider Academy improvement.

The Academy may use appropriate incentives and celebrations to recognise positive attendance.

7. Supporting students with poor attendance

The Academy recognises that attendance difficulties can arise for many reasons and that a supportive, individualised approach is often required.

Where attendance is a concern, the Academy will consider the individual circumstances of the student and family.

Support may include:

- meetings with students and parents/carers;
- attendance action plans;
- pastoral support;
- wellbeing support;
- adjustments to the school day where appropriate;
- reintegration planning;
- support for students with SEND;
- support relating to anxiety or other barriers to attendance;
- liaison with health professionals;
- early help;
- referrals to local authority services;
- multi-agency support; and
- other appropriate interventions.

The Academy will seek to understand the reasons for absence and identify practical steps that can support improved attendance.

Where support is appropriate, the Academy will normally seek to work with the family before progressing to formal enforcement, while recognising that the circumstances of individual cases will determine the appropriate course of action

7.1 Education supervision order

Where appropriate early help or voluntary support has been unsuccessful, the Academy may work with the local authority regarding an Education Supervision Order.

An Education Supervision Order is a formal intervention and is not itself a criminal prosecution.

The local authority will determine whether an Education Supervision Order is appropriate and will communicate directly with the parent/carer regarding the process.

7.2 Notice to improve

Where the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met and support is appropriate but has not resulted in sufficient improvement, a Notice to Improve may be considered.

A Notice to Improve will be issued in accordance with the relevant local authority's code of conduct.

It will normally include:

- details of the student's attendance record;
- the relevant attendance concerns;
- information about the benefits of regular attendance;
- the support already offered;
- opportunities for further support;
- a clear improvement period;
- what improvement is expected; and
- a clear warning regarding possible further action if attendance does not improve.

7.3 Penalty notices

A penalty notice may be issued in accordance with national statutory requirements and the relevant local authority's code of conduct.

Before a penalty notice is issued, the Academy will consider the individual circumstances, including:

- whether the national threshold has been met;
- whether a penalty notice is an appropriate intervention;
- whether further support would be more appropriate;
- whether a Notice to Improve should be used;
- whether another legal intervention would be more appropriate; and
- whether there are relevant considerations under the Equality Act 2010 or other statutory duties.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**, subject to the statutory framework and relevant local authority procedures.

A penalty notice will not be treated as an automatic consequence of reaching the threshold.

Any penalty notice will be issued and administered in accordance with the relevant local authority's current code of conduct.

8. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

Where a student is absent for a prolonged period, the Academy will consider whether additional support is required to enable a successful return.

Where appropriate, support may include:

- a phased or part-time timetable for a limited period;
- a reintegration plan;
- pastoral support;
- regular check-ins;
- support with work missed;
- liaison with parents/carers;
- liaison with health professionals;
- support from external agencies; and
- temporary online learning where appropriate and time-limited.

Any reduced timetable will be time-limited, regularly reviewed and used only where appropriate.

Where health needs prevent a student from attending school for a significant period, the Academy will follow its **Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy** and relevant statutory guidance

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The Academy will monitor attendance and absence data regularly at:

- individual student level;
- year-group level;
- cohort level; and
- whole-Academy level.

Attendance and punctuality will be reviewed throughout the academic year.

The Academy will provide appropriate attendance information to the Department for Education and local authority where required.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The Academy will analyse attendance data to identify:

- students requiring additional support;
- patterns of absence;
- persistent absence;
- severe absence;
- patterns of lateness;
- groups or cohorts requiring additional attention; and
- emerging trends.

The Academy will consider both historic and emerging patterns when determining appropriate interventions.

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Academy will use attendance data to:

- identify students requiring support;
- develop targeted interventions;
- monitor the impact of attendance strategies;
- identify barriers to attendance;
- inform discussions with students and families;
- inform Academy improvement planning; and
- work with external agencies where appropriate.

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses **10% or more** of their possible sessions.

Severe absence is where a student misses **50% or more** of their possible sessions.

The Academy will take early action where attendance is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

This may include:

- meeting with parents/carers;
- identifying and addressing barriers;
- offering appropriate support;
- working with wider services;
- developing an attendance plan;
- monitoring attendance closely; and

- implementing formal interventions where appropriate.

The Academy will sensitively consider the reasons for absence and the individual circumstances of each student.

10. Removing Students from the Academy Roll

The Academy will remove students from the admission register only where the relevant statutory requirements are met.

The Academy will follow the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024** and relevant Children Missing Education statutory guidance.

Where a student is removed from the Academy roll in circumstances requiring local authority notification, the Academy will notify the relevant local authority and follow the appropriate Children Missing Education procedures.

The Academy will make reasonable enquiries regarding the whereabouts of students where required.

10.1 Removing Students from the Academy roll and Child Missing in Education

The Academy will remove children from the Academy roll following guidance within the School Attendance and (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 section 9: [The School Attendance \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukhr/2024/1200/section/9)

In each case the relevant local authority will be informed and where appropriate Child Missing in Education processes followed for the local authority as laid out in their guidance.

10.2 Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carers provides written notification that a student will no longer attend the Academy because they will receive education otherwise than at school, the Academy will follow the relevant statutory requirements before removing the student from the admission register.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local authority procedures.

The policy will be approved by the Governing Board.

The Academy will ensure that attendance procedures remain aligned with the current Department for Education statutory guidance and the relevant local authority attendance arrangements.

12. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside the Academy's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- relevant local authority attendance procedures; and
- relevant local authority penalty notice code of conduct.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The Academy will use the attendance and absence codes prescribed by the Department for Education and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The Academy will ensure that staff responsible for recording attendance are appropriately trained and use the correct codes consistently.

The current national attendance code guidance should be used when determining the appropriate code for individual circumstances.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience

D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)

E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law

Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays