

## 1. Statement of purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure each academy in the University of Brighton Academies Trust (the 'Trust') develops and implements appropriate procedures which help to maintain high levels of pupil/student attendance.
- 1.2 In line with Government expectations each academy is expected to:
  - Promote good attendance, and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - Ensure every pupil/student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - Act early to address patterns of absence
- 1.3 In line with Government expectations it is also expected that:
  - Parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at an academy attend regularly
  - All pupils will be punctual to their lessons

## 2. School attendance

- 2.1 Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils/students can fulfil their potential is a commitment to attendance. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Missing out on lessons or arriving late leaves pupils/students vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.
- 2.2 Every pupil/student should be at their academy, on time, every day the academy is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.
- 2.3 The requirements related to school attendance are contained in:
  - The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6), 437 and 458(4)&(5)
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 2.4 Regular attendance is the expectation of attendance whenever an academy is open.

## 3. Authorised and unauthorised absences

- 3.1 Attendance is recorded at least twice a day in each academy. Absences from these sessions can only be authorised by the Principal for an unavoidable and exceptional reason.
- 3.2 Unauthorised absences are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:
  - parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
  - truancy before or during the school day
  - absences which have never been properly explained
  - children who arrive at the academy after the register has closed
  - parents taking children out of the academy for planned absences, for example a family holiday

## **4. Procedures**

- 4.1 Each academy will inform parents, normally by publishing information on the academy website, of the procedures to follow when dealing with individual absences. This will include details of:
- who to contact should a parent need to report an absence (and the latest time the academy should be contacted);
  - the procedure to follow should a parent wish to request a leave of absence during term time (NB leave in term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances);
  - how long registers will be kept open each morning and afternoon (a pupil/student arriving after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence).
- 4.2 The Trust Attendance Manager is responsible for maintaining procedural documents in line with statutory guidance covering all attendance matters and for disseminating the information to the academies.

## **5. Supporting good attendance**

- 5.1 Parents can support their child's learning by not allowing them to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. Our academies welcome the opportunity to resolve any concerns by working with parents and pupils to overcome any barriers to regular school attendance.
- 5.2 Parents are expected to contact their child's academy at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. In line with Local Authority guidance, the academy may refer the child to East Sussex County Council's Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS) or West Sussex County Council Pupil Entitlement Investigation (PEI) depending on their location.

## **6. Penalty notices**

- 6.1 Local authorities and all schools / academies have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance. Penalty notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent; this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days, but will increase to £120 if paid after this period. If this is not paid within 28 days it will result in legal action.
- 6.2 In common with all schools in its area, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council (PEI) administers the penalty notice scheme on behalf of the academies in the Trust.
- 6.3 The academies in the Trust will request that a penalty notice is issued where a parent appears unwilling to take responsibility for their child's attendance. There are three circumstances in which penalty notices may be issued:
- (i) Planned, but unauthorised absence, such as holidays during term time
  - (ii) Persistent unauthorised lateness
  - (iii) Unauthorised absence
- 6.4 In relation to pupils/students referred to ESBAS or PEI (see paragraph 5.2), these officers may try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use legal interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

## **7. Admission and attendance registers**

- 7.1 The law requires all schools, including academies and independent schools, to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils/students are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils/students (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. The

proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined.

- 7.2 The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil/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.
- 7.3 Every amendment made to the attendance register must include: 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.
- 7.4 Every entry in the attendance register must be preserved for a period of six years after the date on which the entry was made.
- 7.5 Each academy must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil/student is:
- Present;
  - Attending an approved educational activity;
  - Absent; or,
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 7.6 In accordance with the Trust attendance guidance, the academy must follow 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 school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.
- 7.7 Each academy is expected to use the national codes 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. Academies are expected to follow operational guidance from the Trust Attendance Manager on correct use of the codes.
- 7.8 Each academy in the Trust must enter pupils/students on the attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the academy has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil/student will attend the academy. For most pupils/students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.
- 7.9 If a pupil/student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the academy must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly. In this instance the academy will also notify the Local Authority of the failure to attend.

## **8 Safeguarding and attendance**

- 8.1 School attendance and punctuality is often a key indicator in identifying where a child or young person is at risk. Schools play a vital role in ensuring that a child or young person is not at risk of harm, including radicalisation, abuse and child sexual exploitation.
- 8.2 It is particularly important that early action is taken around attendance for these children and young people who are particularly vulnerable, such as those on a Child Protection Plan, Looked After Children, children who are known to be at risk of sexual exploitation, children referred to Local Authority agencies, for example Children's Social Care and those where there are any safeguarding concerns. This action would be taken on a daily basis, and all academies are expected to follow operational guidance issued by the Trust Attendance Manager.

## 9 Children Missing Education or at risk of missing education

- 9.1 The welfare of the students and pupils in the Trust academies is our paramount concern. The Board of Trustees and the academy Local Board will ensure that our academy will safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and work together with other agencies to ensure that our academy has robust arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.
- 9.2 Children missing education, or at risk of missing education, are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training), later in life.
- 9.3 Each academy will carefully consider their safeguarding responsibilities and the best interests of the child, when a decision is taken, in accordance with Trust procedures, to off-roll a student or pupil. This must include notifying the relevant Local Authority who have the statutory responsibility for identifying children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.
- 9.4 Academy staff must follow Trust procedures for the monitoring and reporting of pupils and students either missing, or at risk of, missing education.

## 10. Policy status and review

<b>Written by:</b>	Head of Governance and Admissions
<b>Owner:</b>	Director of Policy and Governance
<b>Status:</b>	V1 = Approved V2 = Approved V3 = Approved V4 = Approved
<b>Approval date:</b>	V1 = HAT: 5/16 V1 = UoBAT: 20/7/16 V2 = 9/11/16 (HAT RC), 14/11/16 (UoBAT RC) V2a = Merger editorial changes September 2017 V3 = BoT 14/12/17 V4 = E&S Cttee 05-12-18
<b>Review Date:</b>	By 2021/22