



## The Wells Academy Attendance Policy

### **Rationale**

At the Wells Academy we encourage all members of the community to strive for exceptional attendance. It is an important focus and part of our day-to-day approach.

**Our expectations are that every student has 97% attendance and strives to achieve 100%.**

Students are given the knowledge to understand correlations between attendance and achievement; this is done through a range of Academy forums and strategies. Our ethos towards attendance is reinforced by a thorough system, with an emphasis on home-school communication. Our attendance standard is 97% and any attendance below that will incur a level of intervention to support students and families.

***All students should be in school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.***

### **Why regular attendance is so important**

There are strong and proven links between student attendance and educational achievement. Attendance of less than 95% (i.e., absences of 9.5 days or more out of the 190 student days in the school year) has been shown to compromise student attainment. At 90% attendance students miss the equivalent of almost 4 weeks education (19 days) and only 10% of students who are persistently absent from school achieve 5 9-4 grades at GCSE.

***Ensuring students attend regularly at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility.***

### **Policy Aims**

- 1) Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:
  - Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
  - Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - Acting early to address patterns of absence
  
- 2) We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.
  
- 3) We expect every student to attend school on time every school day unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.

### **Legislation and guidance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parent is responsible for making sure that a child of compulsory school age receives full-time education. Compulsory school age is defined as aged five to the last Friday of June in the year they reach sixteen.

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:



- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- 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
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Local authority guidance on issuing fixed penalty notices

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold and will also be applied in line with current equalities legislation.

**All absence leave is at the discretion of the Head teacher and is not an entitlement**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Students:**

- To attend the Academy every day and on time by 8:20am
- To arrive on time for all lessons
- To be appropriately prepared for the Academy day-*Perfect uniform and Ready to Learn*
- To inform their tutor/other member of staff of any reason that affects regular attendance.

#### **Parent/Carers:**

- To ensure their child attends the Academy every day
- To ensure that their child attends the Academy on time-8:20am
- To contact the Academy by 8:00am on the first day of their child's absence and on all subsequent days of absence
- To contact the Academy in advance to inform the appropriate member of staff if they know of any reason or problem that may affect their child's regular and punctual attendance
- To provide additional evidence as and when requested to support absence.

#### **The Senior Vice Principal/Principal:**

- Are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Academy Council.
- Support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

#### **The Senior Education Welfare Officer:**

- Encourage and promote 97% attendance rule on a daily basis
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Senior Vice Principal
- Works with education welfare officers, to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Senior Vice Principal/Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices.



### Key Stage Leaders and Deputy Heads of Year:

- Encourage and promote 97% attendance rule on a daily basis
- Monitor attendance data of year groups/ key stages and at individual student level
- Work with the attendance officer to report concerns and support students to improve their attendance
- Work with attendance officer, tutors, and parents to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Notify the attendance officer when a fixed-penalty notice needs issuing.

### Tutors:

- Encourage and promote 97% attendance rule on a daily basis
- Monitor the attendance of all tutees on a daily basis
- Contact parents/carers on second day of absence and report any concerns to Heads of Year
- Work with the Head of Year to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Notify Head of Year if a fixed penalty notice needs issuing

### Teachers:

- Encourage and promote 97% attendance rule on a daily basis
- Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis.
- All teachers' complete registers at the start of every lesson using the correct codes and submitting this information on SIMs or to the school office.
- The attendance officer takes calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### Attendance monitoring

The attendance team and student care team closely monitor the attendance of all students at the Academy and act accordingly should attendance become a concern. Our attendance standard is 97% and any attendance below that will incur a level of intervention to support students and families.

The below table shows the level of monitoring families can expect:

	Description	Consequence
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good Attendance</b>	100% to 98%
	<b>Good Punctuality</b>	No Late Marks
<b>Concern</b>	<b>Attendance Causing Concern</b>	98% - 96% (4 sessions in first half term)
	<b>Punctuality causing concern</b>	Late to school or lessons on 3 occasions in a half term



<b>Attendance Support</b>	96% - 94% (8 sessions in first half term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Letter (Invite to meet with HOY/SENCO/KSL)</b></li> <li>- Medical Evidence required</li> <li>- Parent meeting to commence Attendance Support Plan</li> <li>- Parent meeting at end of review period</li> <li>- Termly PCMs with SLT</li> </ul>
<b>Punctuality Support</b>	Late to school or lessons on more than 3 occasions in a half term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Letter (Invite to meeting-KSL)</b></li> <li>- Sanctions applied for each late to school or lesson mark</li> <li>- Meeting with HOY</li> </ul>
<b>At Risk of PA</b>	Less than 94%  More than 8 sessions in first half term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Letter (Invite to meet with Senior Educational Welfare Officer for final warning/referral for legal proceedings)</b></li> <li>- Pre-legal panel meeting</li> <li>- Review of attendance support plan</li> <li>- Rolling weekly attendance target</li> <li>- Parent meeting every two weeks</li> </ul>
<b>Legal Stage</b>	<90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal target set with SEWO</li> <li>- Legal proceedings if improvements are not sustained</li> </ul>

**N.B. Non-engagement may cause the process to escalate quicker.**

### Attendance registers

By law, The Wells Academy is required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

### **SIMS Registration:**

The attendance register will be taken at the start of every lesson of each school day. Teaching staff are required to enter a present mark (/), an L code for lateness or an N code if a student is not present. If a student arrives after the register has been taken, the Senior Educational Welfare Officer will amend the code to L.

In cases where a lesson is being covered and the staff member is unable to take an electronic register, a paper register must be taken and sent to the Senior Educational Welfare Officer within 10 minutes of the start of lesson.

*Refer to appendix 1 for DfE attendance codes.*

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.20am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09:30. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:15 and will be kept open until 13:00. Arrivals after 09:30am will be



marked as a 'U' code which is an unauthorised absence and will be treated as such following the attendance procedures

### **Unplanned absence**

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08:00am or as soon as practically possible. They should call the school on each subsequent day that the student is absent from school and inform the school of an expected return date.

Where we have not heard about a student's absence from a family member, we will conduct a home visit to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the student.

Parents/carers should send a note in on the first day their child returns back to school with an explanation of the absence – parents should do this even if they have already telephoned the Academy.

Parents can notify the school of an unplanned absence by calling 0115 748 3390.

On the first occasion, absence due to illness will be authorised unless the absence is re-occurring, more than two days and/or the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity and severity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of an illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this.

If a student is absent the Wells Academy will:

- Contact parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Contact parents on the second day of absence (even if parents have notified the school of the absence) to check on the student's health and well-being
- Provide catch-up work for the student when they return to school if needed (please note, this is no substitute for attendance and participation in the lessons).
- Provide support to students to help them improve their attendance, if needed.

A member of academy staff may conduct a home visit for a welfare visit at any time. This is to support families and to try and minimise the impact of prolonged absence from school as every day of missed learning is an opportunity wasted.

All students considered to be vulnerable will be contacted by telephone as a priority and if necessary, outside agencies may be contacted, such as Social Care.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Any routine medical appointments (such as check-ups at the dentist or eye tests) must be made outside of school hours. Where an **emergency appointment** is necessary, families must:

- obtain a leave of absence form from reception



- notify the academy as soon as possible
- bring the student back to school in a timely manner
- obtain evidence of the appointment (e.g., appointment slip / text message)

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences and medical evidence should be provided for e.g., appointment card/text message.

Parents/carers must notify the school of a planned medical appointment or dental appointment by calling 0115 748 3390.

### **When is a student too ill for school?**

We ask that our parents/carers use their common sense when deciding whether their child is too ill to attend school. It may be helpful for parents to consider the following questions:

- Is my child too ill to undertake the activities of the school day?
- Does my child have a more serious condition that could be passed on to other children or staff? For example: scarlet fever, chicken pox. Children can normally attend if they are suffering from a common cold.
- Would I take a day off work if I had this illness?

If the answer to the questions is yes, it might be worth considering keeping a child at home.

### **Vomiting and diarrhoea**

In respects of bouts of vomiting and diarrhoea, we advise parents/carers to consider whether the illness is viral or a contagious illness. If parents/carers feel that the answer is yes, we advise that parents/carers keep their child at home, until they have been symptom free for 48 hours.

### **Medical advice**

The information on types of illness in our policy is general advice and we would always suggest that parents/carers consult a medical professional with individual concerns or queries.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

It is the responsibility of parent/carers to ensure that their child attends the Academy on time every day.

Students who arrive late to school should report to main reception. Students who arrive late to school (after 8:30am) should report to the main reception.

Students who arrive late to the Academy (after 8:30am) without good reason will be set a 40-minute detention on the same day. If a student does not attend this detention, it will then be escalated to an after-school detention for up to an hour on the same day.



Students who arrive after the register has closed at 09:30 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence, using the U code, and set a 60-minute same day detention.

Our Pastoral Leads and Senior Education Welfare Officer will work with parent/carers to overcome barriers which prevent students arriving on time. In extreme cases, when there has been no improvement to lateness and a student persistently arrives late after the close of register the student attendance records may be marked with a U code. This categorises the student as absent for that session and will affect their attendance record. This may result in the case being referred to the Local Authority for them to consider issuing a Penalty Notice for lateness.

### **Truancy**

External truancy is when a student leaves home to attend the Academy but does not arrive. In these cases, parent/carers will be contacted as per first day contact. If a student is considered to be vulnerable or if their whereabouts cannot be identified, it may be necessary to contact external agencies, such as the police and or social care.

Internal truancy is when a student arrives in school but is not in their lesson (or agreed alternative). These incidents will be treated seriously and may result in a period of time within the Internal exclusion provision. However, parent/carers will be notified by the Pastoral Leads if their child has truanted lesson/s.

### **Leave of Absence**

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e., the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance (12 days) by completing a leave of absence request form. The application form is available from the Academy reception. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent/carer, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- The Principal will not authorise leave of absence under any circumstances of more than ten (10) days in one academic year.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This will result in legal action against the parent/carer, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- A Penalty Notice may also be issued when the level of unauthorised absence is 10% or more over a period of ten school weeks.
- Where a child resides with two parent/carers a separate penalty notice will be issued to each parent/carer.



- The term “parent” used in the code of conduct is defined by Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 2 of the Children Act 1989. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person:
  - a) who is not a parent of his/her but who has parental responsibility for him/her, or
  - b) who has care of him/her
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service within the Nottingham City Council.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Nottingham City Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered by the Principal on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.**

### **Effect of a Penalty Notice being issued**

The Local Authority will act in accordance with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2012 to issue a Penalty Notice. Penalties are set at £60 if paid within twenty-one (21) days rising to £120 if paid after twenty-one (21) days but within twenty-eight (28) days. If the penalty is paid the absence covered by the Penalty Notice cannot be cited again.

Penalty Notices shall not be issued if legal proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 are under consideration or are in progress.

There is no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice and a parent/carer can either accept and pay the notice or decline payment.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority must either prosecute under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice. Where a penalty notice is withdrawn the recipient will be informed in writing.

If a prosecution is brought and the parent/carer found guilty then a conviction for an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act they may be liable to a fine of up to £1000.

### **Religious leave of absence**

The Academy grants the statutory leave of absence of up to two days in one academic year in order that students can observe important religious festivals. A request for a religious leave of absence can be obtained directly from reception in the form of a letter with a reply slip, which families need to complete and return.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The Academy aims to promote good attendance and works with parents and students to achieve this aim. Specific strategies may include:

- Recognitions for regular attendance
- Inclusion in termly attendance incentives
- Assembly recognitions
- Recognition certificates
- Recognition events





## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance updated July 2019.

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

### Authorised absence codes:

Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	



		Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

**Unauthorised absence codes:**

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 because of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day/COVID 19