



Whitburn Church of England Academy

Attendance Policy (Including Sixth Form Attendance Policy - (Appendix 2))

Preface

The Academy Vision and Values can be found here:

<https://www.whitburncofeacademy.org/about-us/academy-ethos.html>

This policy and its associated procedures are based on these key principles and values.

Policy

Whitburn Church of England Academy is committed to providing an excellent educational experience for all its students. We believe that high attendance is a key to student achievement. It is our intent to ensure maximum attendance for each student, as there is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance and low levels of achievement. For Whitburn Church of England Academy students, the GCSE results demonstrate a clear link between attendance and achievement:

Attendance group	Pupils	KS2 RWM	% Grade 4+ En/Ma	Attainment 8 (Overall)	Progress 8 (Overall)	Progress 8 (Overall) CVA
Below 90%	34,554	26.2	33%	3.1	-0.84	-0.42
90%-92%	56,390	27.2	49%	3.9	-0.37	-0.17
93%-94%	82,443	28.0	59%	4.4	-0.12	-0.09
95%-96%	142,133	28.7	69%	4.9	+0.08	+0.01
97%	87,811	29.4	76%	5.3	+0.25	+0.13
98%-100%	101,221	30.0	81%	5.6	+0.40	+0.24

Whitburn Church of England Academy is committed to ensuring that parents, carers and students understand the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents and carers have a vital role to play, and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

There will inevitably, be occasional issues that impede full attendance and these will be identified and addressed promptly. We will strive to work in partnership with parents/carers and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Responsibilities

At Whitburn Church of England Academy, we:

- Expect students to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped to learn.
- Will maintain an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to maintain or improve their attendance and timekeeping.
- Will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents and carers as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- Will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- Liaise with the Local Authority's Attendance Monitoring Officer to provide parents and carers with support and advice where necessary.
- Will work in partnership with parents, carers and students to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- Will include students' attendance in reports to parents on achievement at least annually.
- Will enforce the requirement to attend school punctually and reserve the right not to authorise absence for persistent offenders or where there is no reasonable explanation.

Whitburn Church of England Academy students will:

- Attend school regularly and on time.
- Attend all lessons punctually.

Parents and carers of Whitburn Church of England Academy students should:

- Ensure their child regularly and punctually attends school, fulfilling their legal responsibility.
- Telephone the Main Academy number **0191 529 3712** before 8.45 am on the first day and every other day of absence, informing the Academy of the reasons for absence and stating an estimated day of return.
- Work actively with Academy staff and relevant multi-agency staff, to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.
- Notify the Academy if your child cannot attend school and give the reason.
- Not book family holidays during term time.

Registration Procedures

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 determine the admissions and attendance registers that all schools must keep. They also regulate the power schools have to grant leave of absence.

By law, schools are required to record attendance in the attendance register, once at the beginning of the morning session and once in the afternoon, whether the student is present, absent, engaged in an approved, supervised educational activity off-site, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Staff are required to register students at the start of the morning registration session and again at the beginning of each of the five daily lessons.

AM registration opens at 8.55 am Students will register by 9:00 am

PM registration is at the beginning of Period 4 at 1.20 pm

- Students arriving from 9:01 am or 1:25 pm must still register but will be recorded late.
- Students arriving after 9:15 am or after 1:35 pm must report to the Main Office, sign the late book and then should report to their lesson as normal; students will attend an after school detention on the same day as their am late

Whitburn Church of England Academy expects its teaching staff to check the electronic register every lesson. On occasions where the computer system is unavailable, paper registers are taken and returned to the Attendance Officer in the Main Office, who manually adds them to the system at the earliest opportunity.

Only the Attendance Officer will alter the attendance register; there are only three occasions when the attendance register can be altered:

- If it is discovered that an error has been made.
- Where an unexplained absence has since been satisfactorily explained.
- Where a student's name has been legally changed.

Any alterations to the Attendance register must be recorded and include:

- Original entry.
- Altered entry.
- Reason for the alteration.
- Date on which the alteration was made.
- Name of the person who made the alteration.

A student cannot be removed from the attendance register unless they are removed from the admissions register at the same time.

The Academy will not automatically remove a student from roll, even when notification has been given by a parent or carer, if it is suspected that the child is likely to become "missing from education". Liaison will occur with the Attendance Monitoring Officer to try to establish the child's whereabouts.

Records in the attendance register will be preserved for at least 3 years from the date it was entered.

Registration Symbols

The following symbols are used in registers in line with the Department for Education guidance:

Code	Description	Student counted as if present in school for that session?
N	No reason yet provided for absence	No
O	Unauthorised absence	No
/	Present (AM)	Yes
\	Present (PM)	Yes
L	Late (before registers closed)	Yes
U	Late (after registers closed)	No
R	Religious Observance	No
H	Family Holiday	No
S	Study Leave	No
E	Excluded	No
W	Work Experience	Yes
V	Educational Visit or Trip	Yes
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Yes
I	Illness	No
M	Medical/Dental Appointment	No
J	Interview	Yes
G	Family Holiday (NOT agreed)	No
B	Educated Off-site	Yes
X	Non-Compulsory School Age absence	No
C	Other Authorised Circumstances	No
D	Dual Registration	Yes
T	Traveller Absence	No
Y	Enforced Closure	Yes
Z	Student not yet on roll	No
#	School closed to students	No

Absence Reporting

First Day Absence

Parents/carers should ring the dedicated absence line on 08442393457 before 8.45 am to report a student's absence, giving the reason and likely duration of the absence.

Alternatively, a text messaging service is available via the MyEd app or direct to the Attendance Officer on 07975006988. The Attendance Officer will add a comment on the attendance register when such information is received.

The Attendance Officer will run an attendance report at 10.30 am each day to identify any absence where parents/carers have not contacted school. Contact will be made to these parents/carers via phone before lunchtime. Where contact has not been possible, a text message is sent. Where students are deemed to be vulnerable, calls relating to their absence will be prioritised, and the Attendance Monitoring Officer will be notified if a valid reason for absence is not obtained.

Students who have poor attendance at school, without medical reason, may be visited at home by a member of staff.

Continued Unreported Absence

If contact has not been made with the exception of students identified as vulnerable, and a note has not been received, the Academy will request that a home visit is made by either the Pastoral Lead / Inclusion Support Assistant or the Attendance Monitoring Officer; this is to ensure that the child is seen.

Intervention in cases of absence

- **Under 95%** - A number of 'attendance alerts' are sent to parents/carers to alert them of the impact of absence on attendance percentage; form tutor discusses concerns with the student and if the situation persists then a follow up phone call is made home.

Under 90% - Persistent Absence

Contact is made with the parent/carer; a letter is sent to parent/carer regarding attendance concerns. Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead discusses concerns with the student. Parent/carer will be invited to a meeting with the Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead to discuss the attendance concerns. Where absence is classified as persistent, a letter will be sent to parent/carer and referral made to Services for Young people. A meeting will be arranged with the Attendance Monitoring Officer and Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead. An **Attendance Action Plan** (*Appendix 1*) will be drawn up at the meeting; this can be part of a Behaviour Support Plan or Pastoral Support Plan.

Persistent absence is a serious problem for students. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these students at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career.

Where there is no confirmed medical issue identified by a medical practitioner in writing – a letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them that all subsequent absences will not be authorised unless covered by a medical certificate.

At any time, if there is a change in the attendance pattern, unexplained absences or development of a pattern of absences, the above can be over-ridden.

Continued Persistent Unauthorised Absence

This is likely to lead to the issue of penalty notices and other legal consequences.

Truancy

Truancy checks will be carried out as part of the First Day Absence procedures and when the Daily Attendance report is run by the Attendance Officer using the attendance register. Additional random checks will be run and checks will also be made when there is information that a student may be truanting from school.

When a student has truanted from school, the Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead will:

- Interview the student and issue appropriate sanctions. The sanction for truanting is a detention being set to cover the time of lesson/s missed until the work they have missed as a result of the truancy has been caught up.
- Inform parents/carers and appropriate academy and education welfare staff in the case of persistent truants.
- Ensure the truancy is recorded on the student's record.
- Persistent truancy may result in Reflection.

Long Term Absence, Support and Reintegration Programme

Long term absence may occur as a result of injury, bereavement etc.

- Wherever possible, the Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead, in conjunction with Heads of Subjects and the SENCO where applicable, will make arrangements for appropriate work to be sent home for any student who is likely to be absent for a long period. This may also include on-line units of work.
- Any student who has been absent for a long period will have a reintegration meeting. This will ideally involve parents/carers and may involve the Attendance Monitoring Officer and/or other external agencies; such as medical professionals.
- The Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead will liaise with subject teachers to arrange additional time and support for students to catch up on missing work.
- A personalised plan and timetable will be created under the direction of the Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead to ensure the seamless transfer back into lessons.
- The arrangements will be monitored and reviewed at appropriate times by the Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead.

Authorising Absence

Parents and carers do not have the legal right to authorise absence, as this is the responsibility of the Academy Principal.

Student Leave of Absence

Parents/carers requesting a leave of absence for their child/children must obtain a “Student Leave of Absence” form from the Main Academy Office. The form should be returned to the Attendance Officer at least 4 weeks before the planned absence. Requests received within 4 weeks of the planned absence are likely to be refused unless under exceptional circumstances.

The Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead will discuss any request for a Student Leave of Absence with a member of the Senior Management Team, having considered the student’s attendance, any previous requests and the examination schedule.

A Student Leave of Absence will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. The Head of Learning / Pastoral Lead will consult with the Principal where the circumstances are considered to be exceptional. A covering letter must be provided to accompany the leave of absence submitted and should give details on the exceptional nature of the circumstances.

Absence for the following reasons may be **authorised** by Whitburn Church of England Academy where parents or carers have confirmed the absence results from:

- Illness – The school may request evidence from a medical professional involved with the treatment when necessary
- Religious observance.
- Family bereavement.
- An interview.
- A Medical appointment (appointments should be made out of school hours where possible. Appointments made within the school day should be accompanied by a medical letter or appointment card).
- Sporting activities at regional level or higher.
- Performances which are linked to approved Academy activities, e.g. musical performances organised by South Tyneside Music Service.
- Where a student attends alternative or off-site provision as part of a school programme their attendance should be recorded within that provision. The attendance information will be transferred to the Academy.

Absences may be recorded as **unauthorised** by the Academy when due to:

- Family holidays, unless in **exceptional circumstances** and at the discretion of the Principal.
- Truancy.
- Absences for reasons such as shopping, hair/beauty appointments, birthdays, no uniform, etc.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Performances or sporting activities other than those listed above.
- Absence for any commercial ventures.

It should be noted that the Academy reserve the right to contact the Attendance Monitoring Officer and inform the Local Authority of parents and carers who take their child out of school for unauthorised family holidays. The Local Authority will issue penalty notices to those parents/carers.

Changes to registration regulations from September 2013;

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended **to prohibit** the Principal granting leave of absence to a student except where an application has been made in advance and the Principal considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application. If a parent does not apply the leave of absence cannot be authorised. (The main purpose of this is to dispel a parental presumption that they have an entitlement to leave or that they can just tell the Academy that they are on leave).

If leave is taken and is not authorised then the parent has committed an offence under S444 Ed Act 1996. This can be subject to prosecution in the magistrate's court under ss1 and ss1A of the Act.

Penalty notices (s444A and 444B) offer the opportunity to a parent an alternative to prosecution under the act by enabling them to discharge their liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The Department for Education says that this brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children 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.

The Academy will inform the local authority and provide relevant information of any student who goes missing from education so the relevant services can engage with them. The Academy will work supportively with students at risk of becoming CME to maintain engagement with education, working with outside agencies where appropriate (e.g. YOT, Medical needs team).

The Academy also pays due regard to 'Operation Endeavour' and will ensure that provision is made in school for the 'return to home' interview to take place with a person from the local authority, where a child has been reported to the Police as 'missing from home.'

Punctuality

Whitburn Church of England Academy also encourages its students to demonstrate excellent punctuality, which will be recognised and rewarded. If a student attends after 9.01am, they will be given a 1 hour sanction at the end of school the same day.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Academy Attendance Policy

A review of the previous term's attendance data will be a standing item on the Governing Body's Principal's Report. This review will be informed by a review of the data undertaken by the Heads of Learning / Pastoral Lead and their SMT line manager in preparation for the meeting.

Attendance Policy		
Linked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Equality Policy • Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy • Student Behaviour Management Policy • Managing Medications & Supporting Students with Medical conditions at School 	
Creation Date	Version	Status
20 th June 2006	1.0	Approved by the Governing Body
Revision Date		
7 th July 2009	2.0	Approved by Policy & Standards Committee
22 nd June 2010	3.0	Approved by the Governing Body
22 nd November 2011	4.0	Policy re-written and approved by the Governing Body
26 th February 2013	5.0	Approved by the Governing Body
28 th January 2014	6.0	Approved by the Governing Body
27 th January 2015	7.0	Approved by the Governing Body
6 th October 2015	8.0	Approved by the Governing Body
24 th January 2017	9.0	Approved by the Governing Body
10 th October 2017	10	Approved by the Governing Body
23 rd January 2018	11	Approved by the Governing Body
22 nd January 2019	12	Approved by the Governing Body
24 th March 2020	13	Approved by the Governing Body
23 rd March 2021	14	Approved by the Governing Body
23 rd March 2022	15	Governing Body requested further tweaks be made
17 th May 2022	15	Approved by the Governing Body

Appendix 1: Attendance Action Plan Template

Whitburn Church of England Academy Improving Attendance Action Plan						
Student	Parent/Carer	School contact	Start date:	Review date:	Present Attendance %	Target Attendance %
Reason(s) for absence						
Actions to be taken		By	What will happen? (include milestones)		How will we know it is working?	
		School				
		Student				
		Parent/Carer				
		Attendance support services				
		Other agencies				

Appendix 2

Sixth Form Attendance Protocol

Rationale

In any field of employment, attendance and punctuality are highly valued by employers. This Sixth Form attendance policy is written in such a way that our students are treated as young adults and many of the protocols mirror those that can be expected in the workplace.

It is expected that your son/daughter's minimum attendance should be 95%. For most students, this is not an unrealistic target and we urge you to support your son/daughter and the Sixth Form in trying to reach this target. Research shows conclusively that absence is the single most important factor affecting a student's progress and achievement. If there are concerns about your son/daughter's attendance or factors that may impact upon their attendance please contact the Sixth Form Office.

Registration

Students in the Sixth Form are expected to take responsibility for ensuring that they receive a mark. They are expected to arrive punctually and in full compliance with the dress code (including a lanyard and ID badge) ready for the beginning of registration at 8.55 am. Daily attendance is monitored by the Sixth Form Administrator and Attendance Officer and phone calls will be made for any unexplained absences.

Unexpected Absences (illness, bereavement etc.)

All absences should be reported by 9 am and by a parent/carer every day of absence.

If you need to report that your son/daughter is going to be absent, we offer several ways you can report it. You can either:

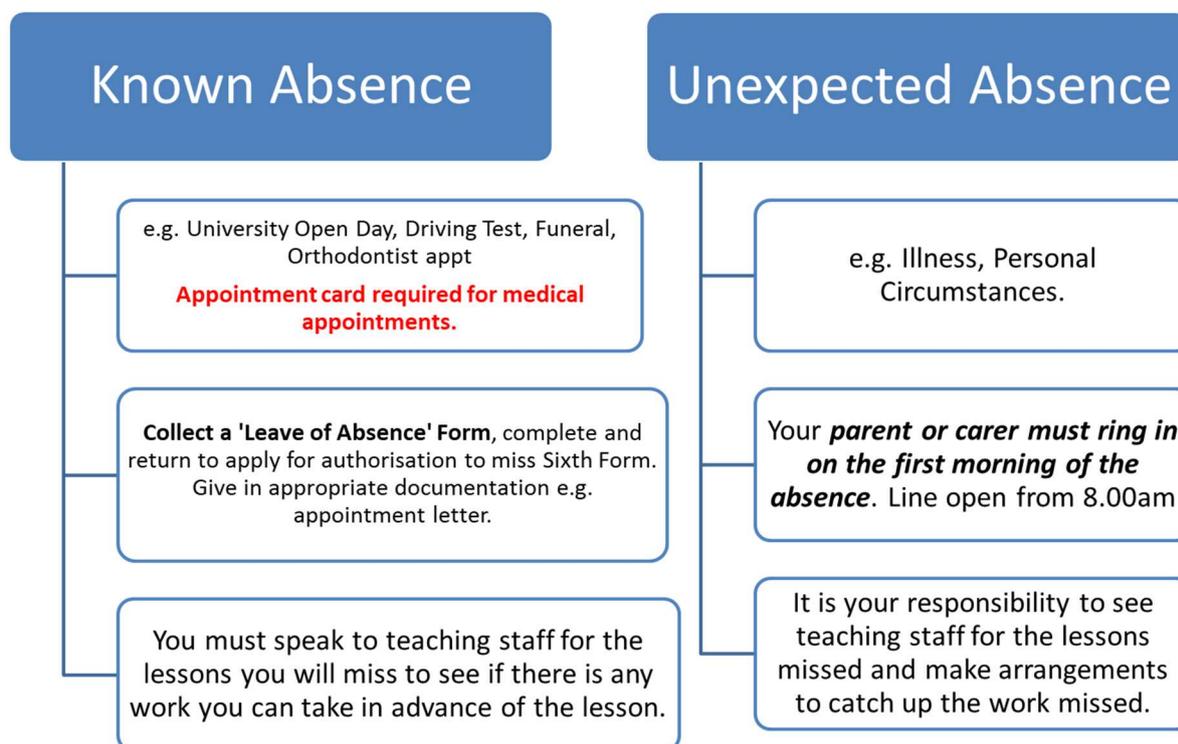
- **Call** the sixth form office on 0191 529 3712, option 3
- Send a **text message** to 07975 006988 (*please note this is a new number and may be different to one you currently have saved*)
- **Call** our dedicated absence line on 0844 2396457 and leave a message on the automated system
- Download the **MyEd app** (available from your App store) and send a message via the messaging feature

Planned Absences

Planned absences include appointments, open days, interviews, funerals, surgery, and young carer's events. Leave of Absence Forms can be obtained from a leaflet dispenser in the Sixth Form foyer. Students are to complete the form fully, including a parental signature, and submit it at least **24 hours prior to the absence. Late requests may not be authorised.**

Routine medical appointments (GP, dentist) need to be made outside of Sixth Form hours. Specialist appointments (medical specialists, orthodontist) may be made during Sixth Form hours due to the difficulty of getting these appointments. All medical appointments must be supported with a copy of the letter or appointment card.

Driving lessons must be booked outside of Sixth Form hours, although theory and practical tests may be authorised. A maximum of four University Open Days will be authorised in any academic year. No paid employment must be agreed to or undertaken during Sixth Form hours. Any student found to be 'at work' during Sixth Form hours may be asked to leave the Sixth Form.



Monitoring of Attendance

The Sixth Form Administrator and Attendance Officer will routinely send letters home where a student's attendance has raised cause for concern. Punctuality concerns will also trigger contact with home. Where attendance becomes a concern an attendance review meeting with student and parents or carers may be arranged.

Punctuality

Punctuality forms an important part of most references and is a crucial aspect of a professional attitude to work and study. Students arriving late to Sixth Form – after 9.00 am – will receive a late mark from their form tutor. Arrivals after 9.15 am must sign the late book and give a reasons for their late arrival. Punctuality is monitored alongside attendance and frequent late marks would trigger an attendance review meeting with student and parents or carers.

Illness at School

If a student is unwell during the school day they are not to leave the site without permission. Students must report to the Sixth Form Reception where the staff will grant permission/contact parents for a student to go home unwell.

Leaving the Site

Students are only permitted to leave the site at lunchtime. Any student leaving the site during the academic day (for an appointment or having been signed out ill) **must** sign the signing out book which is held at Sixth Form Reception. This book will be our record of who is on site in case of emergency so it is **crucial** students adhere to the protocols as laid out in this policy.

Study Periods

Students are expected to fully utilise these periods of time for self-regulated study. Any student who is unsure what they can be doing in these periods is to speak to subject staff in the first instance to seek advice and guidance. Having a study period does not mean a student can arrive to Sixth Form late, or leave Sixth Form early.

Year 13 may be offered home study in the event that they have a 'double free' on their timetable. A form will be issued which requires a parental signature.

Holidays

The Principal will not authorise requests for holidays in term time except in exceptional circumstances. Should you wish to request a leave of absence for a family holiday, please submit your request in writing for the attention of the Principal stating the dates and reason for the request and outlining the exceptional circumstances.