



Southfields Academy: Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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Principal/Headteacher



AIMS

At Southfields Academy excellent attendance and punctuality is essential to ensure success for every student.

We are committed to:

- encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring that their child achieves excellent attendance
- identifying any problems or issues promptly and providing suitable support

Clear information for students and parents is provided in the school planner and is also available on the website.



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Students should attend all of their lessons on time, equipped and ready to learn.

Students and parents are responsible for making sure individual attendance and punctuality is maintained at the highest level.

Absences

If a student is unable to attend the academy through illness or for another acceptable reason, the student's parents must notify the academy of the student's absence by telephone on the first day of absence. A note from the parent explaining the reason for the absence must then be placed in the student's diary on the day of their return to the Academy.

Acceptable reasons for absence would include:

- Illness, with medical evidence (if requested by the academy)
- Emergency medical or dental appointments*
- Employment or education related interviews, approved in advance by the academy
- Days exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of the student belongs.
- Exceptional circumstances outlined in writing to the Principal.

*Parents should avoid making non-emergency medical or dental appointments for their child during academy hours; where this is unavoidable but essential parents should also notify the academy in advance of these appointments wherever possible.

Absences for the above reasons will be deemed to be authorised absences.

Unacceptable reasons for absence would include:

- Excessive illness without medical evidence, looking after brothers, sisters or other children, carrying out chores in the family home, birthdays or anniversaries, festivals (including religious festivals, unless they are religious observance days as outlined above), general trips, such as shopping, trips to the seaside or other days out, sporting events, any form of employment during academy hours, including working in a family business, whether or not the student is paid.
- Absences for the above reasons, or any other reason which is not acceptable, will be coded as unauthorised absence.

Truancy

Truancy at the academy is at a very low level. However, dealing with truancy is a high priority for the academy, and all instances of suspected truancy will be dealt with immediately. Where truancy has taken place parents will be invited to the academy to discuss this with their child and agree support, sanctions and any further follow up actions. This might include a referral to the Academy Welfare Officer.



Persistent Absence (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling for authorised or unauthorised absence. Therefore students with an attendance of 85% or lower are considered to be persistent absentee students (PA students).

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through the academy's pastoral system and this is also combined with an ASM report where absence is affecting attainment which is almost always the case.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of poor attendance, the academy will try to resolve the problem with the parents by contacting home and arranging a meeting as soon as possible. Clear targets will be set and support will be offered to the parents and student.

Punctuality to school

Students are expected to arrive at school before 8.15 a.m.

If a student arrives at the academy after 8.20 a.m. they will be logged as late and will have to stay for Punctuality Plus at the end of the day.

If your child is persistently late then they may be asked to attend a Saturday detention or attend on an INSET day.

Attendance Panels

Where a student is a cause for concern regarding their attendance or punctuality they will be required to attend the Attendance Panel with their parent. Clear targets will be set and support will be offered to the parents and students in order to improve.

THE LAW

Part 1, Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive a full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it is a criminal offence for a parent of a child of compulsory school age to:

Fail to ensure that their child attends school regularly; or

Know that their child is failing to attend school regularly and fail to do anything to ensure their attendance, with no reasonable justification for their failure.



Under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the parent of a child of compulsory school age who:

- has been excluded from school; and
- is found in a public place (including their school) during the first five days of the period of their exclusion
- commits a criminal offence, having been given notice confirming their duty to ensure that their child is not found in a public place during this period in accordance with Section 104 of that Act.

Attendance Register

Under Section 434 of the Education Act 1996, the school must keep an attendance register. The attendance register must be updated at the commencement of the morning session and once during the afternoon session, and must indicate whether the student is:

- Present
- Absent (including a statement as to whether or not the absence is authorised)
- Attending an approved educational activity (including the nature of the activity) or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (including the nature of those circumstances).

Absent Students

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, absence will only be deemed to be authorised in one of the following circumstances:

- The student has been granted leave of absence (for exceptional circumstances)
- The student is unable to attend due to sickness or unavoidable cause
- It is a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent belongs

Where the reason for a student's absence cannot be established at the time that the register is taken, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and only subsequently amended in accordance with the statutory procedure.

Approved Educational Activity

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, an approved educational activity is:

- An activity taking place outside of the school's premises, which has been approved by the school, is of an educational nature (including field trips, educational visits, alternative provision or work experience) and is supervised by a person approved by the Headteacher or Governing Body of the school
- Attendance at another school where the student is also registered



Exceptional Circumstances

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, a student will only be marked as being unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances for the following reasons:

- The academy's premises (or part of the academy's premises) are closed due to an unavoidable cause when students are due to attend
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the student from attending school.

Prosecution

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, the local authority has the power to prosecute any parent of a student for failing to ensure that they attend school regularly, or for knowing that they are not attending school regularly and failing to ensure that they attend. These two offences are triable in the Magistrates' Court and are punishable with a fine and, in the case of the second of the offences, imprisonment for up to three months.

Penalty Notices

As an alternative to prosecution as outlined above, the Academy may impose a penalty notice on any parent of a student for failing to ensure that they attend school regularly, or for knowing that they are not attending school regularly and failing to ensure that they attend, as outlined in this policy.

The penalty is £60.00 if the parent pays within twenty-one days, rising to £120.00 if paid after twenty-one days but before twenty-eight days, and is paid to the Academy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

As part of an Academy approach to maintaining high attendance, the Board of Trustees will:

- At the ECM (Every Child Matters) Trustee meetings review and discuss attendance issues in order to ensure that the Academy meets its attendance targets as set by the Trustees.

Academy Leadership Team

As part of an Academy approach to maintaining high attendance the Academy leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance and punctuality to students and their parents.
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance to support families who are having difficulty getting their child to attend.
- The CLT lead to present to the ECM Trustee meeting an impact report on how interventions are improving the Academy's attendance.

Teachers and Support Staff

As part of an Academy approach to maintaining high attendance the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and parents.
- Ensure that the teaching and learning experience encourages regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement.
- Contribute to meetings and interventions where they are needed.

Parents and Carers

As part of an Academy approach to maintaining high attendance we request that parents/carers:

- Engage with children's education.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance and excellent punctuality.
- Notify the Academy of their child's absence.
- Prevent unnecessary absence by making medical or dental appointments outside of the Academy working hours.

Students

As part of an Academy approach to maintaining high attendance we request that all students:

- Be aware of the Academy's attendance policy in their student diary and communicated by their tutors and Head of Year.
- Speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulty which may impact on their attendance.