

Grace Academy Coventry

Attendance and Children Missing in Education Policy

Policy Reference:	GA-SP005
Version:	V6.1
Status	Operational
Authors	
Applicable to	Grace Academy Coventry
Checked by	
Valid From	December 2021
Review Date	December 2022

Attendance and Children Missing in Education Policy

1. Intent Statement:

Grace Academy Coventry is committed to providing a high quality education for all students and attendance plays a key role in this. With our student care model at the heart of our attendance procedures, we believe that regular attendance and punctuality enables our students to take full advantage of all the educational and extra-curricular opportunities available to them at Grace Academy.

2. Objectives:

- To encourage students to achieve 100% attendance and a minimum attendance of 95%
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students to increase attendance
- To have a student care model which places the tutor as the first point of contact for students and families
- To build relationships with outside agencies that support students and families in promoting good attendance
- To develop a framework in which good attendance is promoted and attendance issues are addressed consistently and appropriately at different levels

3. Statutory/Legal Guidance

- Section 7, Education act 1996 states “It is the responsibility of every parent of every child of compulsory school age (5-16 years) to make sure that s/he receives efficient full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to have any special needs s/he may have met either by regular attendance or otherwise”. Consideration is also given to sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6)&458(4)&(5).
- Amendments to the 2006 pupil registration regulations now make clear that Principals may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.
- If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at an academy fails to attend regularly, his or her parent is guilty of an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months’ imprisonment.

4. Safeguarding

Grace Academy Coventry recognises the relationship between attendance, attainment and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child’s education as unauthorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children vulnerable to harm.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Grace Academy Coventry will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child’s absence and will encourage

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them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school. Once attendance falls below 95% absence may be unauthorised without medical evidence. If a student is absent from school for more than five consecutive days, on the sixth day the absence will automatically be unauthorised until medical evidence is provided by the parents to the school or contact is made directly with the Attendance Officer. On the tenth day of unauthorised absence, the school will complete a child missing in education (CME) referral (see page 5). Unless it is due to illness, unavoidable causes, religious holiday or LA failure to make transport arrangements (as per CME statutory guidance). If a child is missing in education, the academy will make reasonable enquiries about their whereabouts, this may include texts and emails to parents, phone calls home and/or home visits from the school or local authority.

5. Principles:

- Celebrate students with 100% attendance
- Identify students with poor attendance prior to transfer from primary schools and monitor their attendance closely at the start of the academic year
- The importance of high attendance emphasised through assemblies
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance.
- Have systems in place which allow students easy transition back into school after prolonged absences. For example, reintegration student timetables or regular contact with the education welfare officer and local authority
- Form tutors will have conversations with students following an absence and welcome them back to the Academy
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures.
- Complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session and start of all lessons, using Go4Schools
- Act on any school based issues which may affect attendance and punctuality.
- Operate a first day's absence response via the pastoral care system
- Monitor students' punctuality to school each morning and taking appropriate action for persistent latecomers
- Work with the local authority and specifically the education welfare officer to support with persistent absence
- Apply interventions for students with attendance issues
- Share with parents/carers the legalities regarding unauthorised holidays

6. School Responsibilities:

Academy Leadership Team (ALT)

- Responsible for the attendance policy and procedures
- Monitoring of attendance in liaison with pastoral and attendance team
- Responsible for devising and delivery of the attendance improvement plan as part of the whole Academy improvement plan
- Report regularly to the ALT and the LGB on the impact and effectiveness of the Academy strategy for improving attendance
- Work closely with the LA to improve attendance

Attendance Officer

- Day to day recording of attendance
- Liaison with educational welfare officer to support and promote positive attendance
- Communication/attendance updates to parents
- Coordination of attendance registers
- Make referrals for intervention(s) related to absence
- Carry out Attendance Improvement meetings
- Carry out Home Visits

Head of Year

- Monitoring attendance
- Discuss and seek to resolve underlying causes of poor attendance
- Contact with home about concerns
- Highlighting students who need further support or intervention from the Attendance Officer
- Attend regular attendance improvement meetings with the Attendance Officer to identify issues and causes of poor attendance

Assistant Head of Key Stage

- To support the Heads of Year with their responsibilities in improving attendance. This can be: parental meetings, phone calls home, home visits and meetings with the Attendance Officer
- Monitoring of attendance with Attendance Officer and relevant Head of Year
- Liaison with outside agencies such as education welfare officer to support and promote positive attendance

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Form Tutor

- To accurately record attendance and punctuality during AM and PM registration using Go4Schools
- Day one contact support (for those with low attendance): to discuss with home any potential reasons why their child was absent and to promote their prompt return to school
- Discuss the importance of attendance with their tutees
- Discuss any issues/concerns that may affect attendance within their tutor group with the relevant head of year
- Support students in recording weekly attendance figures
- Hold motivational conversations with students to discuss attendance

All Staff

- To accurately record attendance and punctuality in all lessons using Go4Schools
- Provide a positive and safe environment where students want to attend regularly
- Be role models promoting good attendance through their own attendance and punctuality

Governors

- Liaise with ALT lead for attendance to monitor policies, procedures and progress towards improving attendance

7. Procedures

Registers are taken in each AM and PM session, within the first 10 minutes of the lesson. Non-attendance is identified each morning and afternoon as well as within every lesson.

In the morning if the child has not arrived in school and we have not been informed of a reason the following actions will be taken:

- Day 1: a text message will be sent to parents/carers*

If no appropriate response is received:

- Day 2: a telephone call/text message will be made on the second day of unexplained absence

If no appropriate response is received:

- Day 3: a home visit will be completed on the 3rd day of the unexplained absence

*For 2021/2022 disadvantaged persistently absent students are telephoned on day one

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8. Children missing in education

At Grace Academy Coventry we have a legal duty to identify children who are missing education (CME), taking action where necessary and ensuring children are receiving suitable education. This duty applies to all maintained schools, academies, free schools and independent schools.

The CME service is available for referrals when a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown or that a child is not on a school roll and there does not seem to be any education in place.

We will conduct home visits should we be concerned that a student has not been in school, and if we haven't received information from parents/carers as to why their child has not attended

A Child missing in education referral is triggered when:

- The student has been missing from school for 10 days or more and no reason has been given for the absence or the student is on the child protection register and has been missing for 2 days or more
- A child who is on the school role but is not in receipt of their educational entitlement.

After twenty days, if a student is still classed as a child missing in education, contact will be made with LA and the student may be removed from roll.

9. Absence

Authorised absence

We are advised by government legislation and Local Authority guidance that attendance can only be authorised if the following applies:

- Medical reasons - please note medical evidence and/or a parental written note will be asked for upon return to school for student's whose attendance falls below the school's expected threshold of 95%. Medical evidence will always be required if a student has five consecutive days absence from school due to illness. Notes are to be returned to the Attendance Officer
- Religious celebration observation
- If transport provided by the school/Local Authority cannot bring the child to school

Absences may also be authorised for the following reasons, but this will be at the discretion of the Principal:

- Where an absence request form has been completed by parent/carers and is agreed by the Principal
- Where a student has a medical appointment that cannot be changed e.g. a consultant appointment

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- When the student has no fixed abode, their parent is engaged in a trade which require them to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and the student has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months
- Other exceptional circumstances e.g. family bereavement and for a limited period will need to have been discussed and authorised first

Leave of absence during term time

Arranging holidays during term time causes issues for many reasons:

- The student's education suffers
- Lessons and extra-curricular activities are missed
- Parents may be in breach of their legal obligation to send their child to school

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

- Principals 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 Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave
- Principals 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/carer. i.e. the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period
- Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

Process for absence request

- The Principal will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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- The Academy will respond to the request within two weeks. If the Academy is aware of any language difficulties having been notified by the family then appropriate support may be provided.
- There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Principal.
- Where students are absent for a period of 5 consecutive days or more medical evidence will need to be provided.
- If the Principal deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.
- If the Principal deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised. A letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence being taken will be sent to each parent.
- If notified in writing of the decision not to authorise the leave of absence the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions i.e. 5 school days) is met then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Welfare Officer for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice. This will also apply where students have been taken on holiday.
- Each request shall be judged by the Principal on a case by case basis. The Principal must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances.
- All requests for leave of absence must be in advance, in writing, setting out the days requested along with the expected date of return. The reasons for the request of leave during term time must be clearly stated.
- Until permission in writing is given any leave taken will be classed as unauthorised leave.
- The Academy cannot give retrospective approval.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 as amended are adhered to. Where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school after expiry of the agreed date it will be treated as an unauthorised absence and where the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name may, following consultation with the Local Authority, be deleted from the admission register.

10. Elective Home Education

Where a parent or carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school to home educate the school will contact the family. This would be to ensure that parents and carers have carefully considered what is in the best interest of the child. This is particularly important when the child has special educational needs or has a social worker. The meeting would take place prior to any decision being made and other professionals working with the family would be invited to attend a meeting. If you wish to remove your child in order to home educate, a request must be submitted in writing. The Academy will alert the local authority and will complete and Elective Home Education (EHE) checklist form.

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If a parent wants to readmit their child later, the normal system of in year admissions would apply.

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11. Reintegration Timetables (Part-time/reduced timetables)

At Grace Academy Coventry we recognise the legal framework released May 2021 in relation to the rights of all statutory school aged children and young people to receive full time education appropriate to their age and irrespective of their needs.

Grace Academy Coventry ensure compliance with statutory guidance and that they do not inadvertently exclude a student illegally. Grace Academy Coventry understand the impact a part-time timetable can present to any student.

As well as the potential impact on educational standards, a part-time timetable can present a significant safeguarding risk if not managed appropriately. Grace Academy Coventry adheres to the statutory guidance provided in the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. This applies particularly to children on part-time timetables. Grace Academy Coventry will support students to re-integrate into school full time, therefore any part time timetable set up will be referred fortnightly and a clear plan in place to return full time within six weeks.

- At Grace Academy Coventry, this mechanism is only used with the intention of integrating a student back into full-time education.
- The school, parent/careers and other professionals agree in the short-term reduced timetable to support the pupil back into education. A reintegration timetable can be no longer than six weeks.
- [Reintegration timetables](#) are communicated and submitted to the local authority

12. Attendance Intervention:

**Adapted for 2021/2022*



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Letter 1

Parent Salutation

Address Line

Coventry

Postcode

Date

Dear Parent salutation,

Legal Forename Legal Surname – Tutor Group

Attendance Percentage %

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

Falling below 97% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us at Grace and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Any further absences from school may be unauthorised without medical evidence. Therefore, if your child has time off school, please ensure that they bring medical evidence on their return.

If there are any issues that we, as an Academy, need to be aware of, please contact me to discuss the content of this letter at the following email address [insert HOY email]

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Head of Year

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Letter 2

Parent Salutation

Address Line

Coventry

Postcode

Date

Dear Parent salutation,

Legal Forename Legal Surname – Tutor Group

Attendance Percentage

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us at Grace and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Any further absences from school is likely to be unauthorised without medical evidence.

Therefore, if your child has time off school, please ensure that they bring medical evidence on their return.

If there are any issues that we, as an Academy, need to be aware of, please contact me on the below email address [insert HOY email]

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Head of Year [insert number]

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Letter 3

Parent Salutation

Address Line

Coventry

Postcode

Date

Dear Parent salutation,

Legal Forename Legal Surname – Tutor Group

Attendance Percentage %

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

Falling below 93% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us at Grace and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Any further absences from school is likely to be unauthorised without medical evidence. Therefore, if your child has time off school, please ensure that they bring medical evidence on their return.

In line with our attendance policy, and the local authority's code of practice, if attendance does not improve you will be referred to our attendance officer for an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM), you may also be contacted by the local authority and legal action may be taken.

If there are any issues that we, as an Academy, need to be aware of, please contact me to discuss the content of this letter at the following email address [insert HOKS email]

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Head of Key Stage

Assistant Principal

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Letter 4

Parent Salutation

Address Line

Coventry

Postcode

Date

Dear Parent salutation,

Legal Forename Legal Surname – Tutor Group

Attendance Percentage %

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

Falling below 90% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us at Grace and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Any further absences from school will be unauthorised without medical evidence. Therefore, if your child has time off school, please ensure that they bring medical evidence on their return.

In line with our attendance policy, and the local authority's code of practice, if attendance does not improve you will be contacted by the local authority and legal action may be taken.

If there are any issues that we, as an Academy, need to be aware of, please contact me to discuss the content of this letter at the following email address [insert email]

Yours sincerely,

Michele Coleman

Attendance Officer