



The Boston Witham Academies Federation

Haven High Academy

Attendance Policy

The Boston Witham Academies Federation is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all learners. The federation believes sincerely that all learners benefit from the education provided and therefore from regular attendance. To this end the federation will do as much as it can to ensure that all learners achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

AIMS

It is recognised that

- All learners of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No learner should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of learners and their parent/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many learners and their parent/carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- In situations beyond the control of learners and/or parent/carers there may be an impact on attendance. We will, with the agreements and support of parent/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of learners want to attend school to learn, socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

A learner becomes a **‘Persistent Absentee’** when they miss **10% or more schooling within and across the school year for whatever reason** (both authorised and unauthorised). Once attendance drops below 90%, the Academy will not authorise absence without medical evidence. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parent/carer’s full support and co-operation to tackle this.

EXPECTATIONS

We expect the following from our learners

- That they attend the academy regularly.
- That they arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the day.

- That they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending the academy.

We expect the following from parent/carers

- To ensure their children attend the academy regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the academy as soon as is reasonably possible whenever their child is unable to attend.
- Parent/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any attendance issues together.
- To make medical appointments outside of school hours. If this cannot be avoided the child must attend the academy either before or after an appointment wherever possible.
- To provide medical evidence for an absence, this can include an appointment card, sticker or compliment slip, a copy of a prescription or a hospital appointment letter. This must have the child's name and the date of the appointment on. We will not authorise a full day's absence for a morning or afternoon appointment.
- To ensure that their child arrives to the academy well prepared for the day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the academy in confidence whenever a problem occurs that affects the learner's performance in the academy.

We expect the following from our staff

- Attendance is a legal requirement and therefore, staff are responsible for recording accurately learner attendance in the classroom, including from lesson to lesson.

Parent/carers and learners can expect the following from the academy

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- First day contact with parent/carers through the instant messaging service or email where possible when a learner fails to attend the academy without providing a reason. We may also make unannounced home visits if we are unable to ascertain a reason for your child's absence.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose information without the consent of the parent or their parent/carer).
- We will reward good attendance on the Academy's MIS and through Haven Pathways.
- A quality education.

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a learner does not attend, the academy needs to respond effectively.

The Boston Witham Academies Federation employs their own Attendance Officers.

- The instant messaging service, email or the Attendance Officer will contact parent/carers of all those learners who are marked absent at registration. We may make unannounced home visits if we are unable to ascertain a reason for your child's absence.
- All learners should bring a note on return to the academy if no message has been sent in by parent/carers or contact made by the academy.
- If a reason for absence has not been obtained a letter will be sent from the Attendance Officer to the parent/carer at the beginning of the following week
- Telephone messages received by the academy should be recorded on the academy's MIS and filed.
- Where non-attendance continues, the Attendance Officer may make a home visit either by appointment or in some cases this may be an unannounced visit. A letter of concern may also be issued
- If contact is made the parent/carer will be offered full support and guidance to ensure that attendance improves.
- If there is no improvement in attendance, then parent/carers will be invited to attend an Attendance Panel meeting. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, parent/carer and learner and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the learner from attending the academy. The parent/carer will be offered an academy action plan to target attendance. This will be reviewed in a nominated time period to continually monitor with a view to improve and ensure success. You may also be offered help and support through an Early Help assessment and the Team Around the Child process.
- If there is no improvement in attendance, the case may be referred to Lincolnshire County Council for legal proceedings to be considered.

Reintegration

- The return to the academy for a learner after a long-term absence requires careful planning. Staff will be notified of the return of a long-term absentee via the staff briefing.
- A delegated member of staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff should be made aware of this programme and any problems should be notified to that member of staff.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate.

Guidelines for staff on dealing with attendance and absence:

Form Tutors

- Complete registers for those present using the school's MIS.
- Letters received from learners for absence should be collected and passed for recording centrally on MIS and filed with the Attendance Officer
- Notes where the authorisation of absence is questionable to be passed to Year Head/Deputy Head Pastoral Support, who will liaise with the Attendance Officer.

Heads of Year at Haven High/Deputy Head Pastoral Support

- Meet with the Attendance Officer regularly to discuss all learners with average attendance below 90%
- Discuss & consider the level of action to be taken
- Obtain information regarding academic ability that may be affected by poor attendance and liaise with the Attendance Officer.

Note: Three categories of action are possible where learners show up below 90% attendance over a 3-week period:

- absences justified as unavoidable, no action required
- absences avoidable, letter to parents/carers from academy from Attendance Officer
- Absences avoidable and of concern, Heads of Year/Deputy Head Pastoral Support to liaise with Attendance Officer, action plan to be implemented.

Guidance on categorising absence as authorised or unauthorised

Absences which are considered as **unavoidable** and are therefore **authorised**

- Learner was ill
- Learner was attending a religious festival/ceremony with family
- Learner had a medical or dental appointment
(Absence would normally only be appropriate for part of the day)
- Learner was in hospital/having hospital treatment
- Learner was attending a funeral with family
- Learner was attending an interview for a job or place at school
- Learner was taking part in a public performance or an examination
- Learner had been granted leave of absence for exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher or Chief Executive Officer

Absences which are considered as **avoidable** and therefore are **unauthorised**

- Learner was minding the house, waiting for workmen etc
- Learner was shopping with family
- Learner was packing/getting ready for a holiday
- Learner was on holiday
- Learner was going to a pop concert
- Learner was looking after brothers or sisters
- Learner was looking after a sick relative
- Learner was helping with the housework/ family business
- Learner was unhappy/not getting on with others at the academy
- Learner was late up, had late night due to family problem.

The Attendance Officer compiles the data necessary for attendance returns to the LA. This information is used to comply with the necessary reporting to parent/carers requirements. Year Heads/Deputy Head Pastoral Support also use this information to help them monitor learners who are a cause for concern. The information is also used to help set individual, year targets, and Key Stage targets for improving figures.

RESPONDING TO LEARNERS ARRIVING LATE

The school gates are open at 8.00am and we expect all children to be in class at the start of the school day at **8.45am**. If a child arrives at the academy after **8.45am** and before **9.15am** they will be recorded as late. The academy has a strategy to support punctuality which is known as “Late Gate”. For learners who are recorded as late, time will be made up with a Break 1 correction. Those learners who fail to attend the Break 1 correction, will have an afterschool correction (until 4:30 pm). Should non-compliance continue, then a Saturday correction will apply (from 9:30 am to 11:30 am).

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Education Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them not to be on site, this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents/carers could be invited to attend a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer. Legal proceedings may be considered if the problem persists.

The appropriate marks should be entered to record these situations. Parents/carers have been informed of the need to provide an explanation for late attendance. A letter will inform Parents/carers of learners who are regularly late that this is not acceptable and in extreme cases, where no improvement has been made, they will be invited to a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer to address the concern. Punctuality is a requirement of the Education Act and legal proceedings may be taken to ensure that this is complied with.

If learners arrive too late to report to their Form Tutor, they should report to the Front Office and sign in.

RESPONDING TO ACADEMY REFUSERS AND TRUANTS

Students who refuse to come to the academy on a regular basis or who truant are a concern both in terms of their safeguarding and their education. The response to these students will be about supporting them back in to the academy and making up for lost time where appropriate. All cases will be considered individually.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 which came into force from 1st September 2013 remove references to ‘holiday’ from school and ‘extended leave of absence’ as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. (i.e. the previous arrangement whereby schools could grant up to 10 days authorised holiday/absence).

As a result, a request for leave of absence will not be granted for the purpose of a holiday **unless deemed to be exceptional circumstances**.

If you wish to seek approval for any request of absence from the Academy for your child(ren), then you must apply in writing to the Headteacher, at least **FOUR** weeks in advance of the period of absence. You should only then remove your child(ren) if the absence has been authorised, and once you have been notified in writing by the

Academy that the leave of absence has been authorised. Any exceptional circumstances must be clearly set out in the written request to the Headteacher who will consider each case. Guidance from central government states that leave applied for because parents cannot afford the holiday at any other time, medical treatment abroad or because of work commitments will not be classed as exceptional circumstance.

If you then choose to take your child out of the Academy during term time and it is **not** deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the Academy, then this will be coded as an unauthorised absence and an application to Lincolnshire County Council will be made for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued for the period of absence. Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty may result in further legal action being taken against you.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered learner at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.**

Please note: A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from their school.

- **Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to learners subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the LA before a magistrates' court or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £60.00 or £120.00.**

Reviewed June 2018

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Signed off by:

Print name and role:

Date: