



THE CONSORTIUM
ACADEMY TRUST

CROXBY PRIMARY ACADEMY ACCESS TO EDUCATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Effective Date: December 2020

Date of minuted approval by the Board of Governors: 8 December 2020

Review Committee: Board of Governors

Review Date: May 2021

Rationale

The Education Act 1996 states it a legal requirement once a parent has chosen an academy as their child's educational provider, it is a parent's duty to ensure their child attends academy regularly and on time. We view a good pattern of attendance and punctuality at the academy as being a life skill and having a direct impact on the outcomes and achievement of children.

This policy outlines the procedures which the academy uses to address attendance and punctuality and also the statutory obligations of both the academy and the Local Authority in ensuring learners achieve outstanding attendance and an exemplary record of punctuality.

We will take every opportunity to raise the profile of outstanding attendance and punctuality with parents and pupils. In addition, we will endeavour to offer support such as Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychologist, SEN Support and Attendance Support to families and learners to improve areas of difficulty when they are identified.

We will always comment on attendance and punctuality in any reference that is written by the academy. Key staff will meet on a frequent basis to monitor and review attendance procedures.

Background

For a number of years academies have published figures for overall absence and unauthorised absence. Local Authorities were instructed in summer 2008 that from this point overall absence and persistent absence would be published (AAT).

The persistent absence indicator was developed because learner level data revealed that absence is highly concentrated among relatively few learners who account for a large proportion of all absence nationally. Following changes recently announced by The Department for Education 'Persistent Absentee' pupils miss the equivalent of 10% or more of academy over a typical academy year. The legal requirement is 90% attendance.

The percentage absence (% PA) is the number of learner enrolments with 10% or more absence expressed as a percentage of the total number of learner enrolments.

Aims

We aim to achieve the highest possible attendance by our pupils. Good attendance is an essential prerequisite to achieving high standards and we will take every opportunity to promote the importance of attendance with pupils and parents. We target 96% as 'good attendance' in our academy. We provide appropriate intervention and support plans for pupils with a record of poor attendance and monitor groups of pupils so that individuals are given the best opportunities to learn and achieve success.

Attendance Thresholds are set by the Local Authority and ratified by the Board of Governors. Intervention thresholds approved by the Board of Governors is at 95%, for monitoring. Any child who falls below 90% action by the academy is taken.

Building Community, Nurturing Success

Promoting Good Attendance

Attendance and Punctuality are essential to good academic outcomes, social development and positive life skills. We celebrate pupils achieving 100% attendance with a termly certificate.

Across the academy attendance is shared on Academic Reports sent home to parents to explicitly make the link between academic progress and attendance.

Recording Attendance

Learner attendance and punctuality is recorded electronically using SIMS. Pupils are recorded daily in the morning session and the afternoon session

Absence codes used in line with DFE Guidance for Academies and Local Authorities 2008 can be found at Appendix 1

Registers will close 20 minutes after the main session begins and the register is taken. As a result learners registering after 9.05am and 1.35pm will be marked as a U and given an unauthorised absence mark for that session.

Absence Guide

- Day 1 of absence – Inform the academy before 9:00am of the reason and expected date of return of your child. Any medical advice given or visits made.
- Day 3 of absence – Update the academy on your child's progress, any medical advice given and confirmation of when your child will return to academy especially if the condition worsens.
- Day 5 onwards – Update academy on your child's progress regularly. Medical evidence will be requested for five days of absence or more.
- Medical appointments – if your child is absent due to a medical appointment, you will be required to provide an appointment card or letter from the practice, and alternatively, medical appointment cards are available in all reception areas.

Monitoring Attendance Daily Monitoring

- Parents are frequently reminded of the need to inform the academy if their child is legitimately absent on the morning of each day of absence. This is done via the academy website, newsletter and the Annual Summer Holiday letter.
- Attendance is checked at least twice daily by the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer will make contact with the parent on the first day of absence, if no message has been received from the parent. If contact cannot be made, then a letter will be issued that day. If no response to the letter is received within 7 days of posting the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Whenever a learner absence is recorded as unauthorised parents will be sent a letter explaining that this has been done and providing an opportunity to discuss the absence further (Appendix 2). When a learner has 10 unauthorised absences in a 13-week period the Local Authority will issue a formal warning letter informing parents if their child has any further unauthorised absences in the next 15 academy days then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service who will consider issuing a penalty notice on behalf of the Local Authority. Weekly attendance totals will be issued to Senior Staff, Deputy Head-Head of Academy for review.

Longer term Monitoring

- The Attendance Officer will work closely with the Head of Academy to identify learners causing concern. The team will work together to monitor learners with attendance at 90% or less on a fortnightly basis to attempt to resolve any issues and put together attendance support plans for pupils/families when required.
- Pupils with 90% attendance or less and not already on an attendance support plan, parents will be sent a letter and attendance certificate from the academy indicating a cause for concern. (Appendix 3)
- Learners affected will be closely monitored and if significant improvements are not made, parents will be given the opportunity to attend an attendance support plan meeting. The support plan meeting will be run by a senior member of staff. During this meeting the reasons for absence will be

analysed and support offered by the academy to help improve attendance/punctuality. Medical evidence may be requested at any stage to support a pupil's absence if attendance is below 90%; this requirement is removed once a learner is sustaining attendance levels above 90%.

- The monitoring of the 90% or lower learners will continue at regular intervals and follow the above procedure.
- If a learner continues to achieve attendance of 90% or less despite the above procedure being followed, then the Attendance Officer will refer the learner to the Education Welfare Service who would then compile the case for the legal team. This is the statutory responsibility of the LA.
- Parents of pupils with 90% - 93% attendance, will be sent a monitoring letter and attendance certificate from the academy, stating that their attendance could become a cause for concern if it falls below the 90% threshold. This will be closely monitored and if it falls below then 90% then a cause for concern letter will be sent (Appendix 3).
- The academy acknowledges that some groups of pupils (PPG/SEN for example) may have barriers to achieving a regular attendance pattern, in the Senior Staff monitoring we will take particular note of tracking attendance of these groups of pupils.

Absence from Academy for Exceptional Circumstances - Information for Parents

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends academy regularly (see explanation on page 1). There is, however, a discretionary power held by Heads to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Please note this is not an entitlement (see Appendix 5). The Head will only authorise absence in line with the East Riding Behaviour & Attendance Partnership 'Absence from Academy for Exceptional Circumstances Policy'. Heads will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education.

There is no longer a provision in law for Heads to authorise an absence for the purpose of a term time holiday.

Should your request be authorised, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed academy work. This is your responsibility and academies are not obliged to provide work for your child to complete.

Any unauthorised absence will be recorded on your child's attendance records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority and academies have statutory powers to tackle poor academy attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Head has not given permission for or where an acceptable explanation has not been provided by the parent.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a parent after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, warnings may not be given. This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, persistent late arrival after the close of registration or unauthorised absence that has not been authorised as an absence from academy for exceptional circumstances; this includes term time holiday absences. In these cases, the warning is given on the absence request form and detailed within this information leaflet.

If your request is declined and you still take your child out of academy each parent within your household, you may be issued with a £60 penalty notice for each child you have taken out of academy. If a penalty notice remains unpaid after 21 days, it will increase to £120. If after 28 days, it remains unpaid you may be summonsed to appear before Magistrates to explain why your child has unauthorised academy absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from academy may leave you liable for prosecution or a penalty notice, it is important you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve an improvement, then please contact academy to discuss this.

We advise that you do not plan for your child to be absent without speaking to your child's Head first to obtain prior approval. Heads cannot retrospectively authorise absence from academy under any circumstance.

Please note the academy day is divided into two registration periods; for example, if your child is absent for one day this equals two sessions and a five-day absence equals 10 sessions.

Court Action

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority. Where penalty notices are not paid within the published time frame then the Local Authority may be required to initiate legal proceedings in line with their statutory obligations. Any queries regarding penalty notices should be referred to the Local Authority:

Telephone: 01482 887700

Website: <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/academys-colleges-and-academies/academy-attendance/attendance-in-academy/>

Maintaining high standards of punctuality

Staff are given regular reminders regarding the accurate marking of registers which are statutory documents, in terms of absence as well as arriving late.

At Croxby Primary Academy the responsibility for ensuring pupils arrive at academy lies with the parent(s)/careers. The academy endeavours to ensure parents are aware of session times and if punctuality becomes an issue, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Head of Academy to discuss the challenges they are facing.

A half termly review of learners who are frequently late across the academy may result in further action from the Head of Academy.

Children Missing Education

Tracking learners who are missing education is a statutory duty shared between all academies and the Local Authority and all academies follow the locally agreed policy on this matter. Any learners who have not attended academy, without a parental reason being provided for their absence, for ten academy days or more will be referred to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education'.

Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education is the term used by the Department of Education to describe parents' decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to academy. This is different to home tuition provided by a Local Authority or education provided by a Local Authority other than at a academy.

Parents' legal duty is set out in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 as follows:

'It is the duty of parents of every child of compulsory academy age "to cause the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at academy or otherwise".'

Parent: 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 but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him.*
(Education Act 1996 sec.576)

Further information for parents considering educating their child at home is available from:

<http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/academys-colleges-and-academies/academys-and-academy-places/elective-home-education/>

Supporting Guidance

Glossary of terms

PACE caution	The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
PA	Persistent absence (legal requirement is learners with 90% attendance or less)
OA	Overall absence
DFE	Department for Education
LA	Local Authority
U	Unauthorised absence (late after registers have closed)

Appendix 1

List of attendance codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory academy age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Academy closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

Dear Parent

I regret to inform you that *pupil name* has a recorded unauthorised absence on *date*.

As you are aware the academy closely monitors absences from the academy.

It is therefore important that *name* does not receive further unauthorised absences.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Appendix 3

Dear Parent

'Children who have a academy attendance of consistently over 95% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A to C including English and Maths in their secondary education'*

As you may be aware the Department for Education (DfE) reduced the Persistent Absence (PA) threshold to 10% from September 2015. The DfE defines persistent absentees as academy-age children missing more than 10% of sessions in a academy year.

I am writing to inform you that *name* has been identified as a persistently absent pupil and *his/her* attendance in the first four weeks of the academic year (*insert*) is currently *insert*%.

Name's attendance will be closely monitored and we are hopeful that significant improvement will be made. However, if there is insufficient improvement you will be required to attend a meeting to ensure we are all able to work together to support *Name* in improving his/her attendance.

I enclose a copy of *name's* attendance record. If there are any concerns arising from this letter or you require further advice or support please do not hesitate to contact me.

Appendix 4

For guidance on the legal measures available to secure regular academy attendance by the DFE please visit:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DFES-00529-200>

Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

School Name: Croxby Primary Academy					
Student/Pupil Details					
Name:		Date of birth:		Class/Form:	
Address:					
Contact Numbers:					
Sibling Details of Compulsory School Age (or other children living in the household)					
Name:		Date of birth:		School:	
Name:		Date of birth:		School:	
I request permission for my child to be absent from school between: -					
Date of First Day School Absence:		Date of Return to School:		Total of Absent School Days:	
<p>Please detail below the reason for your request for absence from school in term time and include any supporting information. The Headteacher <u>will not</u> be able to consider your request without your <u>supporting documents</u>. <i>Please read carefully the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents attached.</i></p>					
¹Parent's Declaration: <i>I have read the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Information for Parents and understand I/we may receive a penalty notice if my/our child receives unauthorised school absence as a result of this request. Please note the school day is divided into 2 registration periods, for example if your child is absent for one day this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence equals 10 sessions.</i>					
Signed: (Parent/Carer) Date					
Full Name:					

¹ Parent: 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 but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him. (*Education Act*

(b) 1996 sec.576)

Covid 19 Addendum

This addendum is to be used in conjunction with and alongside our Access to Education Policy and Procedures. The rationale behind its creation is to highlight the changes made to appendix 1, which have been put in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and national crisis following national guidance.

Where a child is absent from the academy as a result of Covid in addition to the new category of ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’:

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ should be recorded using code X
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

Pupils who have had two absences recorded for a Friday morning session, parents will be sent an advisory letter and attendance certificate from the academy indicating a cause for concern. This will be closely monitored on a weekly basis.