

**Attendance Policy**

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| **Policy Details** |  |
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 **Context**

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence.

 Parents\* are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time”.

 *\*Definition of parent: (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) A parent in relation to any child or young person, includes any person:- a) all natural parents, whether they are married or not; b) who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for him/her; or c) who has care of him/her. This also includes all absent parents who must have regular contact and an ability to influence the child including his/her attendance (separated parents who do not accompany the other parent on the unauthorised leave should not be included). Parental partners can be included (whether or not they are married or the natural parent of the child as they have ‘care’ of the child. If a student lives with a grandparent or older sibling as their main carer they can also be included as they are the main care provider.*

At The Edge Academy, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping students achieve the best that they can- education is important. Students should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. All research shows that students who attend well achieve well.

It is the expectation of the school that all students will achieve at least 90% attendance. There are a variety of reasons for students missing school. Some are unavoidable but we would ask that you support us in ensuring that your child’s attendance meets both the school and the government’s expectations. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties are best sorted out by the school, the parents and the student at an early stage. We will closely monitor your child’s attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. The school undertakes a wide range of measures to support students where attendance at school is an issue. Where there may be an issue and we fail to see an improvement, it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the student receives the support required to bring about an improvement.

**Expectations.**

**The Edge Academy expects students to**:

 • Attend school regularly

• Arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day

• Keep 100% attendance

**The Edge Academy expects parents/carers to:**

• Encourage their children to attend school

• Contact the office immediately if their child cannot attend school

• Send a note, medical card etc. to the school on return from sickness or absence

• Contact the school immediately if they become aware that their child is reluctant to attend school

**Students and parents/carers can expect The Edge Academy to:**

• Ensure that there is regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and time keeping as a statutory and legal requirement

• Contact home on first day of non-attendance

• Establish early contact with the home when a pattern of lateness emerges

• Act immediately action on any problem notified to us

• Maintain confidentiality

• Positive measures to encourage good attendance

• Support for Students - to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum

• Provide a welcoming, safe and caring environment in which each Student valued and supported

• Build and maintain effective partnerships between the school and its parent body, external support agencies and the wider community

**Punctuality and Lateness**

School starts at 9:30am students are expected to be in first lesson for this time, school opens its doors from 8:40am. Students must attend school on time for first lesson. Parents/carers will be notified if a recurring pattern of lateness develops. If lateness persists, further action will be taken and parents/carers invited in for a meeting to discuss the reason for the lateness. Procedures to be followed in the case of persistent lateness may involve external agencies. Registration will be closed 30 minutes after the official start time (9.30am start time, 10am registers close), after this point

**National Context**

The 1996 Education Act (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child’s household) have a legal responsibility to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by ‘regular’ attendance at school or ‘otherwise’. The 2008 Education and Skills Act (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

**The duty on parents/carers is to ensure that their children are educated, either at school or ‘otherwise’.** Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of ‘otherwise’ children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, ie – FE colleges from the age of 14, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and ‘suitable’ to the child’s education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

Schools must enter students on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. For most students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. (DFE guidance – March 2013)

**Daily Procedures**: Under the 2006 Education Regulations the school is legally required to register students at least twice daily. At The Edge Academy, registers are marked in the morning at 9.30 and then in every single lesson on our electronic register. It is essential that all students are registered on all occasions. School starts at 9.30am when all students should be in their first lesson. At this time they should collect items for the day and make sure that they are aware of any changes / arrangements to the day’s activities. It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day. Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues.

The academy website clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school. If your child tells you that school is to be closed on a day not indicated on the school calendar, please check by telephoning the school.

**Absence from school**

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under the 1996 Education Act, parents commit an offence if the child does not attend school regularly. If your child cannot come to school because of illness, you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone. If no message is received we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make a ‘home visit’ or request the police to undertake a ‘Safe and Well’ visit. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a letter confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school.

**Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent/carer, the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.**

The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school may request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell: this could be a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor’s note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The Principal may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

The school may authorise absence under certain specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Principal in advance to secure authorisation. This **may** include work related interviews and meetings with external agencies (ie- Forward Thinking). The Principal **may** also authorise events where students are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

**Unauthorised Absence from School**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. This is an offence by the parent. Such circumstances include:

• A student not attending school to go shopping for school clothes.

 • A student not attending school as it is her birthday or the birthday of a family member.

• A student not attending school as the family have gone to the airport to meet a visiting relative.

• A student not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member.

• A student not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday.

 • A student not attending school as they are looking after younger siblings.

 • A student attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons.

According to the DFE guidance (March 2013) the following codes are to be used for authorised/ unauthorised absences on the register:

Code I: Illness

Schools can request medical evidence from parents / carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

Code M: Medical or Dental Appointment

Parents / Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.

Code C: Other Circumstances

This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child’s absence from school, ie – family funeral.

Code D: Dual Registered

This code will be used if a student is registered at two schools including The Edge Academy but currently attending the other school.

Code J: Interview

This code will be used when it has been agreed that the student can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam.

Code P: Approved Sporting Activity

This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, ie – training sessions, trials and sporting events.

Code R: Religious Observation

This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only normally authorise one day absence for religious events.

Code V: Educational visits and trips

Code W: Work Experience (Key Stage 4 students only)

Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period - If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

**Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2022 to 2023 academic year**

\*In line with our transition to living with COVID-19 and the latest public health advice, we are no longer advising schools to record pupils who are not attending school because of COVID-19 using Code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where a pupil is not attending because they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive test schools should record this using Code I (illness) unless another more appropriate code applies. Schools no longer need to record pupils who do not attend for reasons related to COVID-19, using Code X.

**Safeguarding**

The school reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance and punctuality issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, ie – female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation. This may be the case particularly if a parent/carer requests a leave of absence during term time. In addition, if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the Safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, ie – social care (CASS), police. The school will inform parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

**Children Missing From Education**

The school recognizes that when a child goes missing from school it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, ie – sexual abuse or exploitation. The school contacts the students’ home school who follows the Birmingham LSCB procedures around “identifying and maintaining contact with children missing or at risk of going missing from education”. If a child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents, every attempt will be made to communicate with parents to ensure the child is safe and well, including home visits by the attendance officer or one of the school’s safeguarding team.

The school will contact relevant agencies after two days absence without confirmation from parents / carers if the child is subject to a ‘Child in Need’ plan or considered vulnerable in other ways.

When a student returns from a period of extended absence, appropriate daily attendance checks will be carried out and their attendance, behaviour, emotional and physical well-being will be monitored closely by the safeguarding team in school. Parents / carers will be invited into school with the student to meet pastoral support as part of the reintegration programme and relevant support will be offered to the student / family as necessary.

**Alternative Provision**

In these cases, the Attendance Officer will ring the placement school or provider on a daily basis to monitor attendance. Any concerns regarding a student’s attendance will be referred to the Vice Principal (Safeguarding) and parents/carers will be contacted and a meeting arranged, if necessary, with parents/carers and staff at the placement school or provider. It is our responsibility to ensure students attend placements on a daily basis and, if applicable, the school will engage with external agencies (ie – social workers / family support workers / youth offending team) to ensure the student attends the placement each day.

**School Trips**

Registers are taken prior to students leaving the school. These are left at the reception and filed. If a student absconds from the education visit, staff will contact the school immediately who will then use the emergency contacts for the student.

**Leave of Absence in term time**

In March 2017, The Supreme Court confirmed the definition of regular attendance as ‘in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school’. If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, we advise parents to send a letter into school outlining the reasons for and dates of the leave of absence. Parents will then be invited into school to attend a meeting with the Principal to discuss the request, complete the necessary paperwork and provide confirmation of travel arrangements (ie – flights details / tickets). During the meeting a date will be agreed by which the student must return to school after the leave of absence.

Under the DFE ‘Advice on School Attendance’ parents\* can no longer expect schools to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday for up to 10 school days per year. The Principal may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are ‘exceptional circumstances'. For example, there may have been a bereavement in the family or other serious circumstances or the Principal may be aware that a family is under strain and in need of time together.

The Principal will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. From this perspective, leave of absence in term time is no longer a parental right and will only be authorised at the Principal’s discretion. Under DFE guidelines, the school will notify the Local Authority if a parent takes leave of absence without the Principal’s permission.

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Under these circumstances, the school will apply to the Local Authority (Fast Track) for a Penalty Notice Fine (£60-£120) to be issued by the Court Section or other legal proceedings by the Local Authority. The £60 Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full separately by both parents within 21 days and will rise to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, parents can be prosecuted under section 444(1), the Education Act 1996. As part of the FastTrack programme, the Local Authority can take legal action and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine under the following circumstances:

• a student’s absence is marked as an unauthorised absence (G code), ie –family holiday – Not agreed or extra days absence in excess of the agreement;

• a student has been absent for a minimum of 5 school days of G code and has had 5 school days of other unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months;

 • a student has been absent for at least 10 school days of G codes, where there has been no other unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months.

**Improving attendance** –

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:

1. Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously this is not always possible but in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that he/she can complete most of his/her timetable before leaving.

2. Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school. Try to make sure he/she has an alarm clock that is reliable. Make sure that he/she has a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school.

3. Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.

4. Check with the school’s Attendance Officer if you have any concerns about whether your child is present in school.

5. Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstance, please contact the Principal and a decision will be made as to whether the absence can be authorised or not.

6. Encourage your child to come to school even if he/she is feeling slightly unwell. Many aches and pains are forgotten when they are with friends and the school will contact you if it becomes necessary.

7. Talk positively about going to school – “What was good about school today?” “Did anything positive/interesting happen?”

8. Monitor your child’s internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.

9. Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact your child’s form tutor or other relevant staff before concerns escalate.

**Improving attendance**

WHAT SCHOOL DOES :

1. Marks the registers in accordance with the law at least twice a day, but also for every lesson on electronic registers.

2. Informs any parents / carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day within one hour.

3. Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.

4. Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only the school can authorise absence.

5. Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and / or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.

6. Provides access to staff with whom attendance related issues can be discussed.

7. Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the student / family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.

8. Provides re – integration support for students returning from absence.

9. Encourages students to arrive on time for school.

10. Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.

11. Works with relevant external agencies if a students’ attendance becomes a concern, ie – Social Care, Forward Thinking, Student Support Service, Police, YOT.

12. Uses the Fast Track process as a means of working with parents to resolve issues affecting attendance.

**Celebration and Encouragement**

1. Attendance board will be made visible in school to celebrate attendance, this includes percentage increase as a school compared to home school along with best preforming tutor groups/year groups. This will be updated minimum of half termly.
2. Challenges and rewards for attendance periodically throughout the year.
3. Celebration of attendance through reward certificates going home to parents/carer’s.

**Fast Track Procedures –Birmingham City Attendance Initiative**

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| Stage | Procedures |
| 1 | Whole school letter sent to all students at the beginning of the school year, signed by the head and placed on the schools website. The whole school letter is also given to new students |
| 2 | Attendance of less than 90% will trigger a standard letter(BCC) from the Principal.  |
| 3 | If no improvement is seen after a period of 10 days, the parents are invited into school for a School Attendance Review meeting (SARM) The meeting is used to discuss the reason for the poor attendance and to offer support to help to improve attendance. |
| 4 | If there is not an immediate improvement the parents/carers will be sent a Formal Warning and the school will submit all the relevant paperwork to the BCC for a Fixed Penalty notice to parents/carers |

**Flow Charts for Attendance and Fast Track**

Breakfast club 8.45 - 9.30

Lesson 4 12.20 -1.10

Lunch 1.10-1.40

*If punctuality and attendance drops support will be offered*

Form Tutor 2.30 -2.40

2.40 end of school day.

Lesson 5 1.40 – 2.30

Reason for absence or lateness recorded.

Lesson 3 11.30-12.20

When pupils arrive they will go to their lesson and continue within school

Registration closes and your child will be classed as late.

Text Message sent to parent/guardian informing pupil ha not arrived at school.

Lesson 2 10.20 -11.10

Break 11.10-11.30

If there is no contact from home and pupil still has not arrived a phone call will be made home.

Lesson 1 9.30 – 10.20

Late

On time

If no improvement in punctuality and attendance ‘fast track’ proceedings started. (Please see next flow chart)



Support through FAST- TRACK

**Attendance of less than 90% will trigger a standard letter(BCC) from the Principal.**

**If no improvement is seen after a period of 10 days, the parents are invited into school for a School Attendance Review meeting (SARM) The meeting is used to discuss the reason for the poor attendance and to offer support to help to improve attendance.**

**Whole school letter sent to all students at the beginning of the school year, signed by the head and placed on the schools website. The whole school letter is also given to new students**

**If there is not an immediate improvement the parents/carers will be sent a Formal Warning and the school will submit all the relevant paperwork to the BCC for a Fixed Penalty notice to parents/carers**

**Procedures for safeguarding in school and checking for truancy**

Class teacher takes register and records present/absent

**Repeat offenders**: meeting to be held with behaviour team and parent/carer; targets put in place for learner to follow; tutors to be made aware of targets set.

On call completes search of building to include all toilets and outside space (with support of on call support staff where applicable)

Reception staff contact ‘on call’ via email/phone to share details of student absence

If student is identified from registers as being present in school but not in lesson or has not arrived to lesson, then class teacher contacts ‘Student Support’ via email oncall@theedgeacademy.co.uk

If student not found, then within 15 minutes the parent/carer will be contacted to notify them.

If student found, they are escorted to lesson. They will logged as truancy on arbor.