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# Belfairs Academy



## **Attendance Policy**

February 2017

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Author	G. Rodolfo
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# 1 Aims

Belfairs Academy is committed to providing a high standard of education for all students. We will ensure that every effort is made to enable students to achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. The academy will actively promote the value of regular attendance. We recognise that high levels of attendance are the single most important feature in improving examination results.

## 2. Statutory framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a student is required to attend regularly at the academy where they are a registered student. The academy is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Only if the academy is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter / message will the absence be authorised.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The various stakeholders in academy attendance have the following roles and responsibilities.

### 3.1 The Governing body

The governing body has the following statutory duties in relation to academy attendance:

- Ensure that admission and attendance registers are properly kept;
- Ensure that attendance statistics are made available to the DfES and the LA, including informing the LA if a student has been continuously absent for 2 weeks or more (without a medical certificate)
- Ensure that attendance data, including authorised and unauthorised absence is provided in the Governing Body's annual report to parents and in the academy prospectus.

In addition, governors will adopt the following strategies which are recognised as good practice:

- Governors agree attendance targets to help the academy to further improve attendance.
- Governors participate in training on attendance issues.
- Ensure that the academy monitors attendance and evaluates the success of the academy's Attendance Policy, as part of the Academy's self-evaluation. The results of this process are reported to governors, who monitor attendance and punctuality at the academy on a termly

basis. The Principal's termly report to governors provides attendance data and an analysis of this data.

Governors are encouraged to ask questions about:

- The attendance of different groups within the academy;
- Any comparative information with other academies;
- Trends in attendance

The governing body may wish to appoint a governor with specific responsibilities for academy attendance matters.

### **3.2 The Principal**

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance and ensures that the academy meets the legal requirements. The Principal sets required targets for attendance and unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures. The Principal ensures that:

- Staff are provided with a positive approach to attendance across the academy, using agreed strategies
- Parents and students are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission. This will be supported in the signing of the Parent Partnership Agreement
- The academy rigorously monitors attendance and will take necessary action to further improve attendance
- Under The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995, there is a duty to make a return to the Local Education Authority where there is a poor pattern of attendance or a student had been absent for more than two weeks.
- The academy works in effective partnership with other agencies which may support attendance issues e.g. Youth Offending Service, Connexions, Social Care, Health Services and Traveller Education Services.

Southend on Sea Borough Council LA requires that returns of attendance be made each half-term. The information in these returns is fed back to academies in a class by class form and will be monitored by the Child and Family Early Intervention Officer.

### **3.3 Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Officer takes oversight of registration procedures, ensuring that staff keep registers in the correct manner, monitoring overall attendance and advising the Principal and Governors.

- The Attendance Officer has responsibility for attendance, gives

attendance issues a high profile in the academy, through the staff bulletin, assemblies, parent contact, and College Leader displays such as graphic displays detailing class, year group and whole academy attendance. These will be prominently displayed so that all stakeholders can view the progress being made on the targets set.

- The designated Attendance Officer is responsible for supporting class teachers or form tutors in following up all attendance issues including post registration.
- The designated Attendance Officer meets regularly with the Child and Family Early Intervention Officer and will discuss attendance issues highlighted by the academies monitoring system.
- The designated Attendance Officer is responsible for organising spot checks on post registration, truancy at regular intervals and all discrepancies will be reported to the relevant form tutor, who will follow up in accordance with the procedures for other unauthorised absence.
- If contacted by a parent in respect of an attendance issue, the academy will arrange to meet with parents who have concerns as a matter of priority and work with them in the interest of their child.
- The Attendance Officer will contact the parent or carer daily by text and phone call if absence is not notified. If the absence persists, a letter will be sent to enquire the reason for absence and a home visit may be made. If the absence persists, the parents will be invited into the academy to discuss the issues. If the absence continues for two weeks, the student should be referred to the LA CFEIT officer and a meeting will be arranged.
- If there are any Child Protection concerns the designated professional for Child Protection should be informed on the first day of absence. The Attendance Officer will also notify the College Leader of any attendance concerns after they have contacted parents and their efforts have failed to achieve improvement. After the Attendance Officer has worked with the parent to achieve good attendance and this has failed a letter will then be sent to parents to explain that as they have failed to sustain an improvement in attendance they will be referred to the Child and Family Early Intervention Officer.

### **3.4 College Leaders**

College Leaders have a vital role to play in raising the attendance and punctuality in our academy.

- The College Leaders and Form Tutor ensure that registration periods are orderly and calm and that the registers are called promptly and

correctly. Registers will be closed as soon as the registration period is finished so that the information is available for inspection by local authority nominees, information and data reading processes.

- Form Tutors are responsible for ensuring that eligible students receive reward points and awards for good attendance. This will be notified to the College Leader to arrange for Attendance Award Assemblies.
- Form Tutors are responsible for welcoming students back to academy on their return from absence. They will also notify other staff members as soon as possible if a student is experiencing particular difficulties that led to absence.

### **3.5 Parents and Carers**

Belfairs Academy wishes to work in partnership with parents to achieve good academy attendance.

- Parents and / or Carers have responsibilities, which are outlined in the Home Academy agreement.
- Parents should ensure their children attend regularly and punctually.
- If a student is late to the Academy on two or more occasions they will receive a 75-minute detention on the next Friday. Parents will be informed of this sanction.
- Parents should provide the academy with up to date information about points of contact and those with 'parental responsibility'
- Parents or carers should contact the academy on each day of the student's absence. They should state the reason for their absence and also the date on which they are expected to return
- On the student's return to the academy the parent or carer should write a note to explain the absence, to be given to the Form Tutor, in addition to the original telephone call
- When an appointment has been made for medical reasons, these should be made outside academy time where possible. The appointment card should be shown in advance to the Form Tutor. Parents should also ensure that their children are properly equipped for the learning environment
- Parents should inform the academy of any relevant factors (e.g. bereavement) which could affect the child's attendance and behaviour.

- Parents should avoid taking holidays in term time.

### **3.6 Students**

Students are expected to attend the Academy regularly and punctually and be appropriately prepared for lessons. It is expected that students arrive by 8.30am and be in the Academy in time for first bell at 8.35am.

## **4 Strategies for promoting attendance**

Belfairs Academy will offer an environment in which students feel valued and welcomed. The Academy's ethos demonstrates that students feel their presence in the Academy is important, that they will be missed when they are absent / late and that follow up action will be taken.

- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to student's needs.
- A variety of methods will be used to contact parents in order to alert them of any attendance concerns the Academy has, such as first day calls, text messaging, letters, home visits etc
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy / practice.
- Good attendance awards will be presented at the end of T2, T4 and T6.
- Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The Attendance Officer will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the academy brochure, academy website, parents evening, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.
- Students who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into academy upon their return.
- Students who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.
- The Principal will make an annual report to the academy's governing body on attendance matters.
- Student Leaders will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies – Educational Psychology Service, Social Care and other agencies – when this may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

## **5 Attendance concerns**

When a student of this academy is absent for no apparent reason it is the duty of **all staff** to consider possible causes. When considering reasons, they should bear in mind factors that could relate to the child protection, behaviour, discipline and the anti-bullying policies. The form tutor will have a particular role to play in identifying reasons for absence and addressing such issues, with the support of the whole academy staff.

## **6 A staged approach**

The academy adopts Southend on Sea LA's policy, strategy and guidance document.

The Education Welfare Service can be contacted directly at Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, SS2 6ER or 01702 215909.

## **7 Holidays during term time**

This academy seeks to minimise the amount of absence taken in term time and The Governing Body of this academy will not authorise any absence due to holiday.

Should a student fail to return without any other contact to the academy, following notification to the Education Welfare Service, they may be taken off roll after ten school days. (Education Student Registration) Regulations 1995

"These Regulations amend the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 ("the 2006 Regulations"). Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application." DFE, March 2013.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Early Help Family Support Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school.

S.9(e).

The Governors will not authorise any holidays at times when students are scheduled to take public examinations. Parents will be notified as soon as these dates are known.

## Attendance Team

Whole Academy Attendance	Local Authority
<p><b>Senior Leader for Attendance:</b> Johan Zweistra</p> <p><b>Attendance Officer:</b> Tracy Miller</p> <p><b>Home Liaison Officer:</b> Louise Facey</p>	<p><b>Child and family early intervention</b> Marc Howson</p>

**Principal**

Mrs B Williams

**Chair of Governors**

Mr P Smith