



LINKS
ACADEMY
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES • WIDER HORIZONS • SUCCESSFUL FUTURES

Attendance Policy

April 2022

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Committee: Academy Academic Improvement Committee (AAIC)

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Amendments

Periodically the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees will add to or revise the content within this policy. Any revision made are noted below.

Edition	Date	Revision made by	Content revised
2.0	01.04.22	Ben Rice	No significant changes

Please note that for the purpose of this policy, the following terminology will apply:

Headteacher	Headteacher of School, Headteacher, Executive Headteacher
Trust	Links Multi Academy Trust
School	Links Multi Academy Trust St Albans/Links Multi Academy Trust Hatfield/Cedars
Parent	Parent means the person with parental responsibility, and could be the carer.

Initial Statement

At Links Multi Academy Trust, we want the whole school community – trustees, staff, parents, carers and students to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. We believe that regular and punctual attendance is key to successful reintegration and inclusion into educational communities and future career success.

Section 7 of Education Act 1996 states: *“It is the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-*

- 1. to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and*
- 2. to any special educational needs he/she may have*

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

Target Setting/Monitoring

In November 2010, the Department for Education issued the following information to schools and local authorities about attendance targets from summer 2012.

‘Local authorities and schools should note that they are no longer required to set targets for persistent absence and overall attendance respectively and the regulations will be amended accordingly. The Department however remains firmly of the view that unnecessary absence is unacceptable and must be prevented and tackled by schools.

The Department therefore expects all schools and local authorities to continue focusing on reducing overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and persistent absence.’

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents, carers and students. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

Links Multi Academy Trust will:

- ensure that the records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- encourage good attendance and will investigate unexplained and unjustified absence;
- ensure that staff set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality
- will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality
- keep parents and carers informed of their child’s attendance/punctuality record
- work with parents and carers should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern
- the Trustees will ensure that the Links Multi Academy Trust complies with section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- we also employ an external attendance improvement officer to run workshops, attendance clinics, make home visits and to support the legal penalty process.

The expectations for **parents and carers** are:

- Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Parents and carers are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn
- Parents and carers will inform school on the first day of absence of the reason for their child's absence from school; the school absence lines are as follows:

School	Telephone	Option
Cedars	01727 836150	6
Links Academy Hatfield	01707 346170	3
Links Academy St Albans	01727 836150	3

- Parents and carers will avoid arranging family holidays during term time
- Parents and carers will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- Parents and carers will ensure that school is informed of any changes of contact details.

The expectations for **students** are:

- All students are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- Students must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to Student Reception
- Students are expected to be ready to learn
- Students will not leave school without permission
- Students will register at Student Reception, if arriving after 9am.

Doors open / procedures

Links Multi Academy Trust school doors open at 8.30am. Students may enter the building at that time, unless there is a valid reason for them to be on the premises prior to 8.30am, for example; meeting in school.

Registration

- Registers are called at 8.40am and 2.50pm Monday to Thursday, and at 2.00pm on Fridays. Registers close at 9am and 3pm. Registers are marked consistently by staff every day at morning (am) and afternoon (pm) registration.
- Any student arriving after closure of the register will be marked late.
- All staff will take a register in each lesson.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance.

Lateness

Any student arriving after 9am should report to Student Reception.

The reason for the lateness will be logged and monitored.

Only in exceptional circumstances will a late arrival after the registers have closed, be authorised e.g. Bad weather, road closure.

Following up Absences and Monitoring

- If no reason has been provided for a student's absence on the first day of absence, the parent or carer will be contacted by the school for an explanation; this may be done via a phone call, text message, email or letter.
- In the event that any safeguarding concerns exist about students for whom contact has not been made, this will be passed on to the appropriate Pastoral Leaders or our Senior Designated Safeguarding Person for that school to follow up.
- Students with patterns of frequent absence and/or unexplained absences will be monitored closely.

Term time holidays

Term time absence may only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Appendix B, Exceptional Leave of Absence Form, needs to be requested and completed in such circumstances.

Fixed Penalty Notice

Links Multi Academy Trust operates a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) system as set out in The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and subsequent amendment 2013. Further details can be found on Appendix A, Fixed Penalty Notice.

Should a student be persistently absent and/or arrive late after registers have closed and no valid reason is provided, the registration mark will be unauthorised and as such parent/carers will be at risk of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

Children Missing From Education

A child is missing from education if:-

- They are of compulsory school age (age 5-16) and
- They do not have a school place; and
- No alternative education arrangements have been made for them.

A child is not defined as missing in these circumstances-

Some children, often the most vulnerable, are at greater risk of going missing from Education. These include:

- Looked after children
- Children living in Women's Refuges
- Young runaways
- Children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation
- Children with long term medical or emotional problems

- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Children of refugees or asylum seeking families
- Children in new immigrant families not yet established in the UK
- Children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background
- Children who are privately fostered
- Young carers
- Children from transient families
- Teenage mothers
- Young offenders
- Children permanently excluded from school

Children missing from Education are at greater risk of:

- Physical harm
- Sexual exploitation
- Becoming involved in crime
- Demonstrating anti-social behaviour
- Abusing drugs and alcohol
- Being illegally employed

It is vital therefore that the authority, schools, and other agencies work closely together to help safeguard children, refer to the Child Protection Policy.

Referral procedure for children believed to be missing from Education:

The referral procedure for children believed to be missing from Education should be followed by staff within Children's Services, in schools and partner agencies when children believed to be missing from education come to their attention.

Anyone who believes a child may be missing from Education should make a referral to the CME Officer by using the appropriate referral form Appendix C and by either:

Telephone on 01992 556867

Or by post to the Children Missing Education Officer:

Room 134
County Hall
Pegs Lane
Hertford, SG13 8DF

Links Multi Academy Trust is GDPR compliant to ensure the security of students' data.

Following this procedure will enable the local authority to meet its statutory duties relating to the identification of children missing education, safeguarding their welfare and providing education.

The CME Officer will follow up all referrals, liaising with other agencies as necessary, to establish whether or not the child really is missing from education.

APPENDIX A

Fixed Penalty Notice

Hertfordshire County Council Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy) – Local Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the police, designated Local Authority Officers and Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence (truancy) of pupils of statutory school age.

The government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to which all parties involved must adhere. Penalty notices may be issued only in accordance with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that:

- the powers are applied consistently and fairly
- duplicate notices are not issued
- issuing a notice does not conflict with proceedings proposed or being taken by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the penalty notice scheme.

2. The Law

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added sections 444A and 444B to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for that offence by paying a penalty. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the framework for the operation of the scheme.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions.

As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Penalty notices apply to parents of children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at maintained schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (Education Support Centres), City Technology Colleges, Studio Schools, UTCs and any other alternative education provision arranged under section 19 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents cannot be prosecuted for the offence for which the penalty notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed and the penalty remains unpaid. Parents cannot be convicted of that offence if the penalty is paid in accordance with the notice.

The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal actions arising from it.

3. Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

4. Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The pupil must have at least **15 sessions** (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
- The school/academy/police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of **two** separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
- Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance

5. Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing penalty notices

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and may not be delegated. Schools, academies and the police may issue penalty notices if they wish to do so but any notices issued by them **must** comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct and a copy of any penalty notice issued must be provided to the Local Authority.

In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Integrated Service for Learning Attendance Teams administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

The Local Authority receives applications to issue penalty notices from schools, academies and the police. Penalty notices will be issued provided that:

- the circumstances of the absence meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct
- the information is provided in the specified manner
- the request is received not more than 10 school days after the final absence cited

The Local Authority retains revenue from the scheme to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

6. Appealing against the issue of penalty notices

There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Hertfordshire's Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.

7. Effect of issuing penalty notices

If the penalty is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it the Local Authority named in the notice shall either institute proceedings against the recipient for the offence or shall withdraw the notice.

8. Payment of penalty notices

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, postal order and by debit/credit card is accepted.

9. Withdrawal of penalty notices

The Local Authority may withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

- has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- ought not to have been issued
- ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
- has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence

10. Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority.



APPENDIX B

Exceptional Leave of Absence Request

As a parent/carers you are strongly urged to avoid taking your children out of school during term time. If it is absolutely unavoidable, you should complete this form and return it to the Headteacher.

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education Pupil Registration (England Amendment) Regulations 2013. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. In addition, Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree to extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

If there are exceptional circumstances (including medical reasons) behind your request, you should give a detailed explanation as to why it is necessary for you to take your child out of school and provide the school with the appropriate medical evidence to support this if required. (The Links Multi Academy Trust will not pay for acquiring this type of supportive evidence).

If it is felt that it would be detrimental to your child's educational progress, leave will not be granted. Leave will not be granted if it coincides with the period of public examinations.

If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and may lead to the Penalty Notice process or legal action being considered by the Attendance Team at Hertfordshire County Council.

By taking family holidays during the designated holiday periods, you will be supporting your child's full attendance, learning and development.

I request that *(name of child)*

(Address).....

..... *(postcode)*.....

be granted leave of absence from Links Multi Academy Trust.

Dates *(from)* *(to)*.....

Reason for absence:

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.....
Additional documentation provided: Yes / No

Signature of Parent / Carer: Date:

Print name:

(To be completed by Headteacher)

Headteacher's Response:

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Leave of absence authorised: Yes / No

Signature of Headteacher: **Date:**



Appendix C

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Children Missing from Education (CME) Referral Form

Use this form to notify the CME Officer of any child you believe is missing from education. Don't worry if you don't know all the details – fill in as much of the form as you can and send it to the CME Officer. Do not use this form for children who have a school place but are not attending regularly.

Name of Referrer	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/>
Organisation	<input type="text"/>	Contact Number	<input type="text"/>
Name (s) of child (ren)			
<input type="text"/>	DOB	<input type="text"/>	M/F <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	DOB	<input type="text"/>	M/F <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	DOB	<input type="text"/>	M/F <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	DOB	<input type="text"/>	M/F <input type="text"/>
Address			
<input type="text"/>			
Name (s) of parents and carers		Contact No.	
Other Relevant Information			

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

This form should be sent to the CME Officer, Central Attendance & Employment Support Team, Room 134, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DF. Telephone: 01992 556867.

Policy Review – Attendance Policy

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Trustees on a biannual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Academy Academic Improvement Committee and the Trustees in April 2022.

It is due for review in April 2024 up to 24 months from the above date.

Signature

Date

David Allen
Executive Headteacher

Signature

Date

Maire Lynch
Chair of Trust