



# ASPIRE ACADEMY

## ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

<b>POLICY FIRST ADOPTED AND RATIFIED BY THE TRUST</b>	<b>July 2014</b>
<b>POLICY REVIEWED / REVISED</b>	<b>November 2015</b>
<b>POLICY TO BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY OR AS REQUIRED</b>	

**Signature:** *Val Jones*

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015

**Name:** Val Jones

**CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**

## **1. Introduction**

There is a strong link between attendance and attainment. We believe that all children and young people have an entitlement to a good education and this is only possible if they attend the academy regularly except in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore we strongly believe that positive behaviour and attendance are essential foundations for a creative and effective teaching and learning environment.

## **2. Purposes**

- 2.1** To encourage, support and reward high levels of attendance.
- 2.2** To promote excellent communication between the academy and parent(s)/carers and commissioners about attendance.
- 2.3** To regularly update pupils, staff, parents/carers, commissioners and the Governing Body about attendance related issues.
- 2.4** To meet the Academy's targets on attendance.

## **3. Attendance and the Law**

- 3.1** Under the 1996 Education Act, parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so can result in legal action being taken against them.
- 3.2** The register is a legal document and Aspire Academy must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, there has been a requirement to use statutory registration codes.
- 3.3** Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the Academy (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the Academy may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate registration code.
- 3.4** Taking time off for a family holiday during Academy term time is not a legal right. It is the Academy's policy not to grant approval of requests to take time for a family holiday during term time, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances would not for example include cost or availability of holidays, parental working patterns, or visiting relatives in the UK or abroad. Applications for a leave of absence for holiday must be made in advance in accordance with academy procedures. If a holiday is taken without prior permission from the academy, or where the request for leave is not agreed but

nonetheless taken, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This will result in legal action being taken against the parent/carer and a penalty notice fine issued.

- 3.5** Parent(s)/Carer(s) should make every effort to book medical and similar appointments outside of Academy operation times.

## **4. Roles Responsibilities and Procedures**

### **4.1 Academy**

It is the responsibility of all staff to set good personal examples of attendance and punctuality. To ensure learners achieve and maintain excellent attendance staff will:

- Promote regular attendance and punctuality.
- Record attendance and punctuality of learners on the electronic registration system both for the two legal registration sessions each day and for each lesson or activity session.
- Contact parent(s)/carer(s) within 30 minutes of a learners' failure to attend for the two legal registration sessions or an individual lesson or activity session. This will be by a mixture of telephone, text or email.
- Attempts at contact will be maintained until successful.
- An absence will be regarded as unauthorised until an explanation is received and the Academy determines whether it is willing to authorise that absence and assign a 'reason' code to it.
- Praise and reward good and improved attendance.

### **4.2 Pupils**

Learners will fulfil their responsibilities by:

- Doing their best to demonstrate good attendance and punctuality
- Answering the register clearly during registration times.
- Ensuring they move quickly to the designated learning space at change of lessons or activity sessions and at the end of break and lunch times.
- Arrive at any off site provision 5 minutes before the stated starting time.
- Bring and hand in an absence note if they have been away from the Academy, unless a parent/carer has already notified the academy of a reason by telephone, text, email or in person.
- Work collaboratively and co-operatively with the Academy, other agencies and their parents and carers to resolve any attendance or punctuality issues.

### 4.3 Parents/Carers

Parent(s)/Carer(s) will fulfil their responsibilities by:

1. Understanding that it is their legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend the Academy punctually and on a regular basis unless there is an acceptable reason and see themselves as partners in the education of their children. Good attendance is broadly seen as less than 5% absence over the course of the year except for exceptional circumstances.
2. Only the Academy, within the context of the law, can approve absence, NOT parents (as laid down in the guidelines of the DFES).

Parents **must** understand that the only reasons for authorised absence are the following:-

- illness
- being prevented from attending the Academy by any unavoidable cause
- as a result of a religious observance by pupil's parents – must be requested in writing to the Principal prior to event
- medical and dental appointments (a whole day's absence is not acceptable and parents should aim to arrange such appointments so as to minimise disruption to the Academy day)
- family bereavement
- job interviews
- exclusion
- to participate in approved public performances

Parent(s)/Carer(s) of learners whose attendance falls below the Academy target of 95% for no good reason will be invited to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting at the Academy and learners may not be permitted to participate in the many additional events/activities of the Academy.

Please note: annual family holidays should not be taken in term time and **will not be authorised**, except in the most exceptional circumstances.

3. The following absences will be considered "approved educational activity".
  - work experience
  - off site educational tuition
  - trips and visits
4. Contact the Academy Office by telephone, text, email or in person on the first day of a pupil's absence and keep in regular contact with the Academy while their child is absent.

5. Work closely with the Academy staff in the instance of regular lateness or absence from lessons/activity sessions, in order to discover the reason(s) why and work to ensure that this does not happen again.
6. Not condone their child's absence from the Academy unless there is a legitimate reason.
7. Provide medical evidence to support absence from the Academy if the Academy requires one. For absences of 3 or more days due to illness, the Academy will require medical evidence.
8. Request, fill in and return a Leave of Absence request form at least 4 weeks in advance of taking an unavoidable Leave of Absence during term time in order to seek the relevant permission. This leave of absence may be marked as unauthorised at the academy's discretion.

## **5. Academy Attendance Support & Essex County Council Educational Welfare Service (ECC EWS)**

The Academy employs staff specifically to work in and support parent(s)/carer(s) and learners in ensuring good attendance. These staff will contact parent(s)/carer(s), including unannounced home visits, to discuss matters of concern. In turn, our Academy Attendance Support Staff will liaise with Essex County Council EWS in cases where attendance remains a concern following intervention and if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers.

## **6. Attendance Targets**

Attainment is strongly linked to attendance and research has shown that if learners are to achieve their full potential they must attend the Academy regularly. To this end learners will be given an attendance target and supported with strategies to help them achieve their individual target which will contribute to the collective one set for the Academy by the Governing Body.

## **7. Review of the Policy**

Our Attendance Policy will be reviewed in line with our policy review plan or at an earlier date if needed.