



NEWMARKET ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Newmarket Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole Academy community – students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and Academy Governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.3 This policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. It has been agreed between Newmarket Academy and local feeder primary schools as a common policy across all schools. Each school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2 ACADEMY’S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at the Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the Academy community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the Academy’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the Academy. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared regularly with the SLT, are made regularly available to all staff, students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body regularly. He/she will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3 Registration
- 2.3.1 The Academy is required to mark the attendance register at the start of the day and also at the start of each lesson. Classroom teachers/form tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers to confirm whether a student is present or absent. This includes completing a register for enrichment activities (Period 6), trips and other educational activities. The Attendance Officer will then add details of any absence, using the prescribed codes (shown in *Appendix 1*).
- 2.3.2 The register will be called promptly at the start of each lesson. A mark will be made in respect of each student.

2.3.3 The registers will close at 9.30am and 2.15pm. Any student who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Students who arrive before the register closes will be counted present but will be dealt with under the Academy's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 4.5 on page 6).

2.4 Categorising Absence

2.4.1 A mark will be made in respect of each student during registration. Any student who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the Academy in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the Academy as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the Academy at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Principal.

2.4.2 The Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a student's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render students extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous and, except where a student is clearly unwell, staff at the Academy will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Academy.

2.4.3 If no explanation about an absence is received by the Academy within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

2.4.4 Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- a) where leave has been granted by the Academy in advance, in exceptional circumstances, where the parents have applied for and been granted a special leave of absence.
- b) where the Academy is satisfied that the student is too ill to attend.
- c) where the student has a medical appointment and evidence has been provided (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand).
- d) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent belongs.
- e) the student lives more than three miles away and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority.
- f) the student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months.
- g) in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

2.4.5 Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent
- the Academy is not satisfied with the explanation
- the student is staying at home to mind the house
- the student is shopping during school hours
- the student is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday
- the student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence

2.5 Approved Educational Activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Class Registers

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness: Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the school office and measures taken to locate the student(s).

2.7 Staff Training

The Academy Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3 COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the Governing Body. The data will inform the Academy's future practice to improve attendance.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by House group, tutor group, at subject level and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, students/students with special educational needs, Pupil Premium and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the LEA and DFE within the stipulated time frame.

4 STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING AND IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at the Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and attendance is promoted in school. The Academy has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week.

4.2 First-Day Calling

The Academy has in place a system of First-Day Calling. This means that parents will be contacted by telephone, text or email on the first day a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the Academy will send a letter to them.

4.3 Academy Strategies to Tackle Absence

The Attendance Leader is responsible for the Academy management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that the Academy intervenes in non-attendance at an early stage. Where there is an emerging pattern of a student's absence the Academy will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.4 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service. Regulations (Education Student Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every student who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 8 school days or more. Schools must also inform the LA of every student who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those students who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 8 continuous absences.

4.5 Lateness and Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class if they are late. Students who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3.3 on page 4) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence (see para. 4.3). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

Students who arrive late for school but before the register closes will get a late mark. If a student accumulates 5-15 minutes lateness in a week they will receive a break detention with Tutor (if this is missed it becomes a lunchtime detention); 15-30 minutes lateness in a week results in a 30 minute lunchtime detention (if this is missed it becomes a one hour detention after school); 30 minutes or more lateness in a week results in a one hour after school detention (if this is missed it becomes a 0 hour SLT detention after school).

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late should therefore report to Reception to sign in. It is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure.

For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day sign out/sign in.

4.6 Post-Registration Truancy

Post-Registration Truancy occurs when a student goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. The Academy takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. The Attendance Officer checks all class registers every period for absences and takes follow up action when appropriate. If, however, a student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

4.7 Local Authority Communication

The Academy will inform the local authority, via fortnightly meetings with the local authority Education Welfare Officer, of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

5 **SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The Academy will consider every application individually. Its' policy is NOT to grant permission for special leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for special leave of absence is not a right. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the special leave of absence.

The Academy will consider authorising special leave of absence for:

- Service personnel and other employees on active duty and other exceptional circumstances

Requests for special leave of absence for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of holiday
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods and
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

The Academy will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

The Academy will NOT authorise a special leave of absence during periods of national tests ie: GCSE examinations.

6 **EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Extended leave of absence will only be granted during term time in exceptional circumstances. Parents must complete relevant documentation which is then passed to the SLT attendance lead to review.

7 PENALTY NOTICES

- 7.1 The Anti- social Behaviour Act 2003, section 23 empowers designated Local Authority (LA) Officers, Headteachers (and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

Newmarket Academy reserves the right to fine any unauthorised absence.

Parents have a legal responsibility (Education Act 1996, Section 7) to ensure that their children receive a full-time and efficient education and LEAs have a duty to enforce this when necessary. A parent is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of the child. (Education Act 1996, Section 576)

- 7.2 Penalty Notices are intended to be early deterrents to patterns of unauthorised absence. Their most effective use is likely to be for parents who are able but unwilling to ensure their children attend school regularly.

A Penalty Notice Referral may be made by a school if any of the following criteria are met:

- 7.2.1 where a student has been identified for the first time as having 8 sessions (a session being a morning or an afternoon) of unauthorised absence.
- 7.2.2 where a student has had at least 8 sessions of unauthorised absence and, in the company of a parent, has been stopped under Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (i.e. during a 'truancy sweep' conducted by Police and Education Welfare Officers) and the parent has failed to give a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence which the school has confirmed is unauthorised.

Parents who meet the criteria above will receive no warning prior to being issued with a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will not be used in the case of unauthorised absence of Looked After Children.

- 7.3 Referrals to Penalty Notice Protocol are made by completing the Penalty Notice Referral Form and sending it to the Education Attendance Service in accordance with current procedure.

Provided all criteria are met, a Penalty Notice Letter will then be sent to parents by the Education Attendance Service. Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. The Penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid in the first 28 days, doubling to £120 if paid after 28 days but before 42 days. If the Penalty is not paid in full within 42 days of issue, the Local Authority may start legal proceedings against the parent in the Local Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure their child attended school regularly.

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued. Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges parents' liability for the period to which the Notice relates.

Parents will not receive more than one Penalty Notice per child in any 12 month period.

A full copy of Suffolk County Council Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Penalty Notice Protocol is available by contacting the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

8 PARENTS' / CARERS RESPONSIBILITIES

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by the Academy.

The Academy expects parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend the Academy regularly
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- Not expect the Academy to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school

Parents will also be expected to:

- Notify the Academy on the first day of absence
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day
- Work in partnership with the Academy, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities
- Contact the Academy without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. The Academy will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns

All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or form tutor.

Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher or form tutor a note from their parents to explain the absence. Students also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

A Guide for Students is provided in *Appendix 3*.

9 GOVERNORS' RESPONSIBILITIES SECTION 175 (2)

The Governing Body shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the Academy are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the Academy.

10 CONCLUSION

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the best outcomes for every student:

- Attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- The Academy curriculum teaches children to be healthy
- Schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- The best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly
- Good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- Membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for, the well-being of others
- Good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling lifestyle

11 REVIEWING THE POLICY

Newmarket Academy will review the Attendance Policy every year.

12 APPENDIX 1 – REGISTER 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. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised 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 school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Academy closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

COVID-19 PANDEMIC 2020 – 2021

Newmarket Academy will implement all DFE policies and guidelines relating to attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic. From September 2020 the expectation is that all students will attend school and the Attendance Policy will be reinstated and implemented. The usual following rules will apply:

- 1) It is the duty of the parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly (where the child is a registered pupil) and is of compulsory school age.
- 2) It is the responsibility of the school to record attendance and follow up absence.
- 3) The availability of the local authority to issue sanctions relating to unauthorised absence from school will now continue.

If parents or students have concerns about attendance during the pandemic they should speak to the school office in the first instance. The school's risk assessment refers to attendance and the steps that the school will take to promote attendance at the current time.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 the school has implemented a number of safety measures which must be adhered to by staff and students. These can be found on our Academy website in our risk assessments. For clarity the following summarises who cannot attend school:

- 1) Students who have COVID-19 symptoms.
- 2) Students who live in the same household as someone who has COVID-19 symptoms.
- 3) If someone in your household is extremely clinically vulnerable, the Academy will discuss individual cases with parents as necessary.

In conclusion, students of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies and where the absence has been authorised for example:

- 1) The student has been granted a leave of absence.
- 2) The student is unable to attend because of sickness.
- 3) The student is absent for a necessary religious observance.