



STROOD ACADEMY

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

	Name	Date
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Attendance Policy

Strood Academy Attendance Lead = Ms Barlow, Assistant Principal

At Strood Academy we believe that high Attendance rates are a significant factor in maintaining the quality of education that we provide. If we are to maintain the continuity of education for our students, maximize their potential and prepare them for the world of life and work, we must ensure that absenteeism is kept to an absolute minimum. Strood Academy works in conjunction and guidance with the DFE ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) order to improve and maintain high levels of attendance.

What is good Attendance?

There is sometimes a perception that an Attendance rate of 90% is good. This is because an examination score of 90% means excellence. However, as an attendance rate, 90% is unsatisfactory, it equates to missing 20 days per year. Strood Academy attendance target is 97%. The table below shows the impact on a students' learning over the course of the academic year if they are not present:

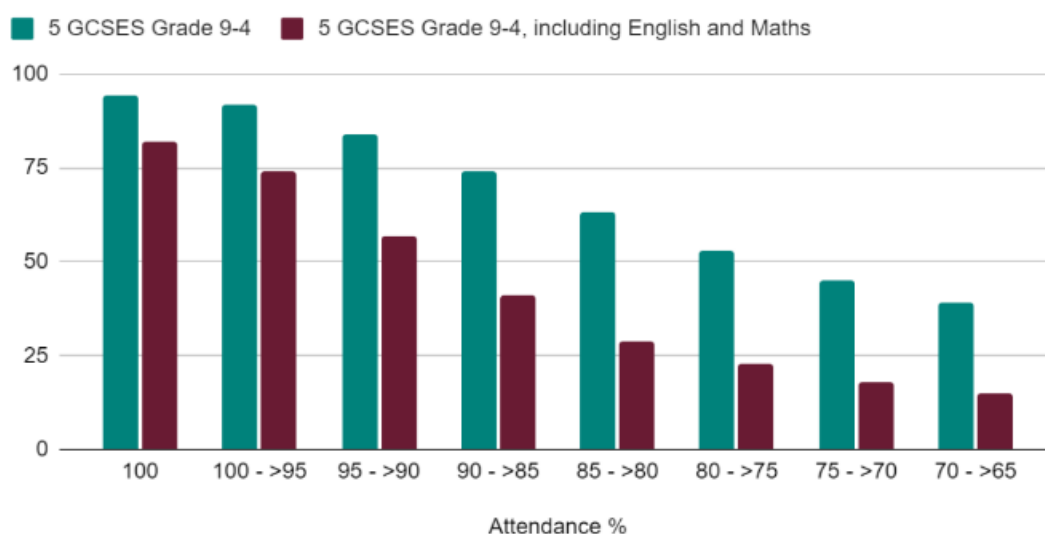
90% attendance = 4 weeks lost	50% attendance = 19.5 weeks lost
80% attendance = 8 weeks lost	40% attendance = 24 weeks lost
70% attendance = 12 weeks lost	30% attendance = 28 weeks lost
60% attendance = 16 weeks lost	

THE IMPACT OF ATTENDANCE ON ATTAINMENT . . . DID YOU KNOW?

Government research shows students who have less than 90% attendance (20 or more days missed in a year) achieve, on average, a whole grade lower than expected in examinations. [The Education Act 1996](#) states that parents and carers must make sure their children receive an appropriate education by attending school regularly. If a parent or carer fails to ensure this, they are guilty of an offense and can be prosecuted. Proceedings will take place in a Magistrates Court.

Prosecution is a serious step and parents or carers will be given the chance to work with the Academy and with Medway council's Attendance Advisory Service to School and Academies (AASSA) in support of their child. Parents and carers must make efforts to improve their child's attendance before prosecution is considered.

*Impact of Attendance on KS4 Attainment
(Data from the Department for Education)*



WHY IS GOOD ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT?

- To make new friends and maintain friendship groups
- To learn and enjoy new experiences
- To develop skills that you will need in later life
- To take part in a wide range of activities in and outside of Strood Academy
- To learn how to look after themselves and encourage independence
- To feel safe and listened to
- To improve their chances of having a good career or life chances
- To make a positive contribution to Strood Academy community
- To learn to establish a habit of punctuality to support students later in life
- To prepare students for the world of life and work

HOW CAN A PARENT/CARER HELP?

- Tell your child how important school is and actively promote 100% attendance
- Contact the school whenever your child is absent: on the first day of absence and each day of absence. Contact by calling the absence line directly on 01634 716621/07860054458 or via email attendance@stroodacademy.org. Failure to do this may trigger a safeguarding referral or a home visit from the Academy.
- Praise your child for working hard and attending school.
- Provide proof of medical appointments and medical treatment to the academy.
- Organise non-urgent medical appointments where possible outside of school time.
- Check that your child is organised for school the night before (uniform, PE kit ready, books and bag packed)
- Make sure your child has a good night's sleep and wakes up in good time for the school day, arriving no later than by 8.30am.
- Take time to talk to your child about what they have done in school.
- Talk to someone at the school if there is a problem or reason why your child finds it difficult to attend regularly.

A. Aims

1. To provide an Academy ethos in which students' attendance is valued as a key component of advancing their educational achievement.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a key priority so that students have the opportunity to make progress and achieve outstanding educational outcomes.
3. To improve the overall attendance percentage of students at Academy and reduce persistent absence.
4. To provide support and guidance to students and parents/carers in matters relating to attendance and punctuality.
5. To provide and regularly review the system of rewards and sanctions.
6. To work closely in an effective partnership with the Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies (AASSA) of the local authority in addressing attendance/punctuality problems.
7. To work in an effective partnership with parents/carers.
8. To provide a 'first day' and 'third day' contact using the ParentMail system and personal telephone calls.
9. To collaborate with College pastoral teams and Attendance Staff.

B. Objectives

1. The Attendance Policy Objective is to ensure parents/carers and students understand the value and importance of excellent attendance and its direct link with student achievement, progression and opportunities for future learning and employment.
2. To demonstrate the benefits to students of excellent attendance.
3. To demonstrate the link between excellent attendance and success in coursework and examinations.
4. To promote an Academy culture/ ethos that celebrates excellent attendance and punctuality.
5. To encourage full participation in Strood Academy life and ensure that all its students receive a full-time education. Through excellent attendance at the Academy, students will be able to maximise their opportunities and be helped to realize their potential. High attendance ensures students are well prepared and supported for their examinations.

Regular attendance at the Academy is a statutory (Education Act 1996) requirement. The register is taken every AM and PM and is designated for attendance reporting. Registers are also taken every period by the subject teacher.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Education Act 1996 is quite clear about absence from an Academy. An Academy must differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act(2003) now gives the Local authority and Academy the power to issue penalty notices for unauthorised holidays in term time, and for unauthorised absences of at least 10 sessions in any previous 6 week period. (Please note there are 2 sessions in a day AM and PM register).

Where penalty notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child of whom the child resides with. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

Authorised absence is where the Academy has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be absent from the Academy or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences must be treated as unauthorised. (ref. DFES 0628-2003)

Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence, only the Principal can do this. However parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the Academy to consider.

Parentally-condoned absence can be a problem as it means disruption to a child's education. The Academy need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence whether written, telephoned or given in person.

However all absence, authorised or not, counts against the Academy statistics, since the Department for Education publishes in its school league tables the total amount of absence a school or Academy incurs. Your child's absence also impacts on their academic and personal development.

The Academy's attendance team will closely monitor attendance and punctuality. Ongoing concerns will result in telephone contact/text messages and/or attendance clinics and home visits by the Family Liaison Officer. Should attendance/punctuality not improve, letters from the academy will be sent requesting medical evidence. If this is not received then a referral will be made to the AASSA who then as part of their role could action home visits.

Leave of Absence during term time

Parents/carers must not take students out of school during term time except in exceptional circumstances. Authorisation for leave of absence in term time may only be given by the Academy Principal. Parents/carers must be aware:

- You can show that the reason for the leave of absence satisfies exceptional circumstances and evidence is required.
- Permission sought after a leave of absence has been taken will not be granted.
- A formal application needs to be made in writing to the Principal prior to the leave of absence and handed in to the Academy Attendance Officer. The Principal will advise their decision in writing. If you are not happy with the decision and feel your request of absence is an exceptional circumstance, you are entitled to appeal through the Academy Complaint Policy which can be found on the Strood Academy website
- The Academy requires professional medical evidence (not over the counter medicines) for any absence of more than two days, otherwise the entire absence will be unauthorised. Over the counter medication will not be regarded as evidence. This can be in the form of a copy of the prescription or letter from the medical profession etc.
- If a Parent/Carer believes there are valid reasons for a leave of absence that qualify as exceptional circumstances they must write to the Principal in advance including supporting evidence. The Principal will then consider the case.

If a leave of absence is taken after it was declined or if it is taken without notice, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the local authority to each parent. These Penalty Notices require the recipient to pay £120 per child but reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. The procedures and consequences outlined above are applied equally to persistent lateness and unauthorised absences. Non-payment will result in the case being presented at the Magistrates Court.

Illness, medical and dental appointments

As far as possible medical appointments should be made outside Academy hours.

Medical appointments count as authorised absence if evidence is provided.

Students should obtain a pass from Attendance Office before leaving for the appointment. Students should sign back in at Attendance Office upon their return.

Medical appointments do not necessitate a full day of absence unless substantial travel is required. Proof of time and place of appointment may be requested.

Medical evidence will be requested by the Attendance Team as proof of absence. Medical evidence may be in the form of appointment card, copy of a prescription note, prescribed medication sticker on packaging.

Please note we are not asking for a medical certificate from your Doctors.

If the authenticity of illness is in doubt and the child has been referred to AASSA, they may in certain circumstances consult the student's GP, once parental consent has been obtained.

When a student is sick whilst at the Academy, they are to inform a teacher who will if necessary send for the college pastoral manager or first aider to assess them. The first aider may feel it appropriate to contact the parent/carer and discuss their child's illness. If it is agreed they need to go home they must report to reception and be officially signed out. If Parents/Carers are unable to collect their child and they are of secondary school age, and have given verbal permission for the student to leave the academy, they will be issued with an exit pass which confirms the student has permission to leave the site. This requires the Parents/Carers to contact the academy as soon as the student arrives home.

Please note students must not contact parents/carers during the academy day requesting collection or permission to leave. All communication between academy and home must be done via student services.

Days of religious observance

This is an absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs. Parents/carers must give advance notice. This is recorded as an authorised absence.

Interviews with prospective employers/careers guidance/FE provider

The Academy asks for advance notice and proof of the appointment, for example a letter of invitation.

Suspensions

Strood Academy aims not to externally exclude students and will always attempt to suspend internally within the academies Lodge provision.

The lodge provision has been developed as part of our behaviour management plan as a strategy to avoid the need for external exclusions which are detrimental to the education of our students.

We hope that parents/carers and students will realize that this provision has been put into place to reduce interruptions to learning.

Alternatively students who are placed at an offsite provision (as an alternative to suspension) as part of the academies behaviour policy. It is an expectation that students arrive at their allocated school on time and complete the number of days they have been issued. Failure to attend these provisions will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Fixed Term Suspensions:

In situations where suspension is the only option, a student suspended for a fixed term remains on roll and the absence is recorded accordingly.

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child is not present in a public place in Academy hours during the first 5 Academy days of the suspension. Under the regulations parents/carers may be prosecuted or receive a penalty notice from the local authority if the child is present in a public place on the specified dates without reasonable justification, as these will be recorded as unauthorised.

From the 6th day of a student's suspension until the expiry of their exclusion students will be required to attend another school provision. Arrangements for this will be made by Strood Academy.

From this 6th day of exclusion attendance is shown as a 'B' meaning educated off site. Non attendance at the alternative provision will be unauthorised and if your child does not attend a fixed penalty notice may be issued from the local authority.

Permanent Exclusions

Permanent exclusions are rare but during the period of appeal or review the absence is authorised.

A student's name may be removed from the Academy roll on the first Academy day after the day on which:

- (i) the independent appeal panel upholds the permanent exclusion
- (ii) the independent appeal panel does not uphold the permanent exclusion, but does not direct the student's reinstatement
- (iii) the prescribed period for lodging an appeal has expired and the parent has not lodged an appeal
- (iv) the parent/carer has, before the expiry of the prescribed period, advised the Academy Clerk to the Governors in writing that he/she does not intend to appeal.

Lateness to Academy

All students are required to be punctual to Academy and arrive no later than 8.25am in preparation for morning line up at 8.30am. Punctuality to Academy is a legal requirement and regular punctuality checks will be undertaken. Students regularly arriving to school late may incur appropriate sanctions, including an academy same day detention.

Morning

Students must arrive at the Academy in preparation for line up at 8.30am, in which the AM register is taken. Registers will close at 9am. Students arriving up to 9am will receive a late mark (L code) and be escorted by college pastoral staff to the late room where they will remain for the remainder of form time 9.20am. They will then receive a detention to be served on the same evening. If a child arrives after 9am then the same procedure will apply, however their attendance will be recorded as "U" unauthorised absence. 10 unauthorised absences in a 6 week period may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Afternoon

For the PM session students will register in lessons in the afternoon and registration will close at 12.30pm. Students who arrive late to lessons will be coded as L mark and will receive a sanction.

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored and individuals causing concern will be supported by the Attendance and college pastoral teams. Further issues will be reported to the AASSA.

In School Truancy

Registers are taken by the subject teacher every lesson. If your child is identified as being absent due to truanting the teacher will raise an on call truancy alert. At this point the pastoral team will try and locate the child on academy grounds. If the child cannot be located within a reasonable timeframe then the academy will contact parents/carers for their support in locating them as this becomes a safeguarding concern. Appropriate sanctions will be set by the academy to those students who decide to truant.

Rewards and Incentives

- Students with 100% attendance and 100% termly attendance will be eligible for weekly and termly awards.
- Awards will also be given to celebrate excellent/improved attendance or punctuality.
- Rewards and incentives are regularly reviewed and may be changed.

Pregnancy

In cases where a student is pregnant the student should be advised that the Principal will need to be informed.

If the Academy finds out a student is pregnant, the Academy should arrange a meeting with the student and her parents/carers in order to set up a Risk Assessment and to discuss how her educational needs are to be met.

If a female student is absent with a pregnancy related illness, this will require a medical note.

Absence from the academy due to a student being pregnant is at the discretion of the Principal.

If health allows the student should return to the Academy with minimum interruption. Absence for ante-natal classes and if the baby is ill, should be classified as 'authorised'.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to secure education of their children of compulsory age either by regular Academy attendance or otherwise. Parents/carers of teenage parents are obliged therefore to ensure their child attends the provision arranged by the Academy.

Removing a Student from the Academy Roll

School Transfer:

If parents/carers transfer their child to another school or Academy, they should advise the Attendance Advisory Officer and the relevant head of school, as a matter of priority, providing all necessary details, including any new address (if relevant) and the school or Academy the child is transferring to.

When in the process of a school or Academy transfer the child must continue to attend Strood Academy until a start date has been agreed with the new school or Academy. If the Academy does not receive this information and it is evident the child has left Medway, he or she becomes a 'Child Missing Education' (CME). Any child in this category is reported to the Child Missing Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under safeguarding legislation and ensure the pupil is on roll within another Local Authority or abroad.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

If parents or carers take the decision to educate a child at home, they must tell the Academy of this in writing – this letter or email should be addressed to the Principal and include the date of decision to home educate and a brief explanation of the reasons for EHE. The Academy will offer a meeting to attempt to resolve any issues first but should a letter be received, they will advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with parents or carers. They will only be removed from roll once the LA has confirmed receipt of the required letter. If an EHE request letter or email is not received, the student remains on the Academy roll and action may be undertaken following irregular or non-academy attendance procedures, again this could lead to prosecution or an instant fine under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies (AASSA)

The AASSA works closely with the Academy and may convene home visits, send court warning letters and hold Pre Panel Proceeding meetings to which parents/carers and students are invited, in the event of attendance concerns. The AASSA may enforce the 1996 Education Act to S4441/1A instigate legal proceedings if required.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ratifying and reviewing the Academy attendance policy and for regularly monitoring attendance and punctuality data. They are in full support of the Academies systems and routines in enforcing high expectations in relation to attendance.

The Assistant Principal Student-Welbeing is responsible for:

- implementing the Academy's attendance policy
- ensuring that the policy is notified to all staff and complied with at all levels
- ensuring that the policy is made available to all staff appointees and to parents/carers who request to read it
- ensuring that the policy is regularly reviewed and, where necessary, revised
- authorising termly attendance reports to the DfE.
- leading strategies to improve attendance placing increased importance on early intervention to avoid a pupil becoming a persistent absentee.
- responsible for regularly liaising with the Academy Attendance Officer.
- providing documentation regarding attendance and punctuality as required by the Principal/ Governors and the LA
- responsible for rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality in each College.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- day to day management of the attendance office
- communicating with parents/carers in the event of unauthorised absence
- communicating with School Staff/DOP to promote improved attendance
- meeting weekly with ASSAA, keeping a record of the meetings
- producing weekly and termly attendance figures as required
- producing attendance and punctuality data for the Principal, VP and AP's and the Governing Body
- reporting regularly to the VP Student Welfare
- keeping data updated on a daily basis.
- carrying out first day calling and 3rd day home visits (with FLO) if no communication from parents/carers is received.

Form Tutors are responsible for

- ensuring that they report any attendance and punctuality concerns promptly
- identifying and celebrating excellent attendance of any designated students
- checking and monitoring the attendance register of their mentees and following through contacts with families
- ensuring that their form are aware of the contents of the Attendance policy
- taking appropriate action within current guidelines to counteract any form of lateness.

Teachers are responsible for

- taking an accurate register within 10 minutes of lesson starting
- notifying any attendance and punctuality concerns to the attendance office immediately via phone or email.
- taking appropriate action within current guidelines to counteract lateness to class e.g. detentions, phoning home etc
- celebrating excellent attendance in lessons by issuing reward points.

All Staff are responsible for

- supporting and implementing the policy.

The Local Authority

The Local Authority has the right to consider taking legal action or the issue of a penalty notice against parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer of the child in line with the Medway Code of Practice.

Appendix 1 DfE Registration Codes

- / Present (AM) \ Present (PM)
- B Educated off site
- C Other Authorised Circumstances
- D Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)
- E Excluded (no alternative provision made)
- G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- H Family holiday (agreed)
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
- J Interview
- L Late (before registers closed)
- M Medical/Dental appointments
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- P Approved sporting activity
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- T Traveller absence
- U Late (after registers closed)
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience
- X Non-compulsory school age absence.
- Y Enforced closure /School/LA Transport unavailable / widespread disruption to travel
- Z Student not yet on roll
- # School closed to students