



PONTEFRACT
ACADEMIES TRUST

Attendance & Punctuality Policy



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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Pontefract Academies Trust recognises the link between high levels of attendance and academic progress. To this end, each school has responsibility to provide a welcoming, productive and safe learning environment, which supports high levels of attendance. Across the Trust, all staff strive to ensure that all pupils/students receive a full-time education that maximises opportunities to fulfil potential.
- 1.2 Pontefract Academies Trust recognises that attendance is everyone's business and that the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families.
- 1.3 Statistics show a direct link between underachievement and absence below 95%. Regular and punctual attenders make better progress both socially and academically, achieving positive outcomes. When they do not attend it impacts on their overall achievement and well-being. As such, all staff have a responsibility to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- 1.4 As a Trust we acknowledge that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
- 1.5 Key staff in each school will work with and support pupils/students and their families to ensure that each pupil/student attends the school regularly and punctually. This is led by the School Attendance Champion who is part of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 1.6 In all Trust schools high attendance is expected. To support the achievement of this aim the Trust will:
 - Ensure staffing structures, roles and responsibilities promote consistency in carrying out attendance related activities.
 - Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all including pupils, parents/carers, teachers and SPRB members.
 - Implement procedures and strategies that actively promote good attendance and ensure that these are communicated clearly and consistently.
 - Communicate term dates, inset days and assessment periods at the earliest opportunity to all parents/carers to forward plan.
 - Ensure the accurate recording of attendance and punctuality data through an electronic Management Information system, informing tracking and monitoring systems.
 - Monitor individual, year group and cumulative attendance patterns to inform strategic planning.
 - Recognise and reward good attendance and punctuality.

- Seek to investigate and address unauthorised/persistent absence and frequent/persistent lateness.
- Inform pupils/students and their parents/carers of their attendance levels at regular (often weekly) intervals.
- Develop positive and consistent communication between parents/carers and each school.
- Recognise and implement individualised plans for pupils/students with specific needs (this includes pupils with special educational needs, a disability or a long-term medical condition).
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health and provide them with additional support.
- Ensure Leaders to have due regard to the Equality Act, and, where appropriate or required, make reasonable adjustments for pupils/students with specific needs.
- Work with parents/carers and agencies, along with the voice of the students to implement plans and targets, in order to provide support to improve attendance when required.
- Work with the local authority to support pupils that are cross boarder.
- Enable the recording, reporting and analysis of attendance and punctuality data.
- Continually improve the overall percentage of pupils/students attending.
- Reward good attendance and punctuality and support attendance barriers in the first instance and sanction poor attendance and punctuality if required.
- Where appropriate, or required by law, work in partnership with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Team and other agencies to support parents/carers and the pupils/students to improve attendance and punctuality and ensure that children are safe.
- Share attendance data with local partners to allow targeted support and collaboration when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Support parents and pupils by working together to address any school barriers to attendance.
- Meet with parents and pupils who are at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers.

1.7 This Policy is supported by the Trust's Attendance & Punctuality Procedural Instructions. The procedural instructions provide the detailed directions for staff, parents/carers and pupils/students to facilitate compliance with this Policy, defining:

- How absences may be authorised (including what constitutes authorised absence).
- How absence must be notified (including the steps taken where a pupil/student does not attend, and the absence has not been notified or authorised).
- How requests for family holidays during term time will be considered.

- The Trust's Attendance Management procedures
- The Trust's procedures for addressing Persistent Absence/Persistent Lateness and severe absence.
- How reintegration to school following a period of extended absence will be managed.
- The Trust's attendance strategy.

1.8 The Directors of Inclusion and Safeguarding is responsible for producing and updating the Attendance and Punctuality Procedural Instructions.

Any material changes to the Procedural Instructions will be presented to the ELT for approval. Revisions will not become effective until ELT approval is given.

Procedural advice and/or guidance may be sought from the Education and Standards Committee prior to approval of the supporting Procedural Instructions where this is deemed necessary by the ELT. This allows for an equitable balance of strategic direction and oversight for Trustees, whilst ensuring that the Trust is able to proactively and reactively review, respond to and update operating processes in a timely manner, drawing upon the professional knowledge and expertise within the Central Team and within its schools.

2. The Trust's Expectations of Staff

All staff shall:

- Work to build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Maintain a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Apply policy and procedures fairly and consistently, adopting a support first approach.
- Record attendance accurately using the Trust's Management Information System.
- Uphold the school's duty to inform relevant services in cases of repeated or persistent absence, where there is no improvement following the provision of support or reasonable adjustments as per the most recent DFE guidance.
- Support pupils/students returning to school following a period of extended absence, as and when required.
- Appropriately direct any absence requests to facilitate a prompt response to parents/carers.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools, the LA and partners where pupil absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

3. The Trust's Expectations of Parents/Carers

It is expected that parents/carers will:

- Provide their own contact details along with those of any other nominated contacts, with a minimum of two emergency contacts, and update the school of any changes on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure that your child arrives on time for school each day, in full school uniform and ready to learn.
- To inform the school if your child is unable to attend (by 8.20am wherever possible) including the reason for absence and expected date of return. (If no return date can be provided, it is expected that parent/carers contacts the school each day with an update).
- Advise a member of staff (e.g. Form Tutor, Attendance Officer, Student Liaison) if they have not been able to register in a secondary setting.
- Maintain an awareness of term dates and avoid booking holidays during term time, especially during assessment periods.
- Avoid keeping your child away from school for reasons other than illness or authorised absence.
- Provide information or evidence on request in relation to frequent or extended absences.
- Work alongside the school to address any school barriers to attendance.
- Meet with staff/relevant services (such as the Education Welfare Team) to discuss concerns about your child's attendance and punctuality.
- Uphold the Trust's Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 This policy has due regard to legislation, statutory guidance and accepted industry standards including but not limited to:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe In Education
- Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions 2015
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 2006 (and subsequent amendments)

- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs 2023
 - Children Missing Education 2024
- 4.2 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 makes clear that parents/ carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education. Under Section 444 of this Act, a parent/carer who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.
- 4.3 Trust schools have statutory duty to take register twice daily; once in the morning and once in the afternoon and record absences in line with Government guidance and absence codes, from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (pupil registration) regulations England.
- 4.4 The Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that schools can only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.
- 4.5 Frequent or persistent absence (attendance at or below 90% as defined by the DfE) may be referred to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Team. Where necessary statutory action can and will be taken under Section 444 Education Act 1996 or an Education Supervision Order under the Children's Act 1989. This may take the form of a penalty notice issued by Wakefield Council, or the prosecution of parents/carers in the Magistrates Court resulting in a fine or Statutory Order, or a referral to Social Care Direct under the category of educational neglect, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50%).
- 4.6 The Trust may put formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract or education supervision order.
- 4.7 Work with the local authority to prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or not deemed appropriate.
- 4.8 Registers are legal records and schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.
- 4.9 The policy will be implemented in accordance with the following Trust policies:
- [The Local Authority's Education Welfare Policy and procedures](#)
 - Behaviour for Learning (Primary Phase) Policy
 - Behaviour for Learning (Secondary Phase) Policy
 - Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - SEND Policy
 - Supporting Pupils with Long Term Medical Conditions Policy
 - Home Visit Policy

5. Policy Scope

5.1 This policy applies to those involved with procurement activities on behalf of the Trust including:

- Teaching Staff
- Non-Teaching Staff
- Volunteers (including SPRB members)
- Pupils/Students
- Parents/Carers

6. Policy Author

6.1 This policy is the responsibility of the **Director of Inclusion and Safeguarding**.

7. Policy Approval

7.1 This policy is approved by the **Education and Standards Committee**, in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

7.2 This policy was approved by the Committee becoming effective on **01/09/25**.

8. Policy Review

8.1 This policy will be subject of review every year.

8.2 It will only be re-presented to the Education and Standards Committee for approval in the event of any material changes. Where the review results in no material changes, the previous effective date will continue to apply, however the last review date will be specified in this section.

8.3 This policy was last reviewed on **25/06/25**.

9. Policy Distribution

9.1 This policy will be made available via:

- The Trust Website
- School Websites
- The Compliance Library

10. Version Control

- 10.1 The changes to this policy over time will be documented on Every.
- 10.2 If you spot any broken links or errors within this policy, please report this to clerk@patrust.org.uk.