



**Date adopted on: September 2019**

**Date of review: September 2021**

**Responsible person: Assistant Principal [Student Welfare]**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Aims and Purpose**

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential.

The Boulevard Academy believes that regular attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

The Boulevard Academy values all students and we will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of Academy improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Bullying, Behaviour and SEND.

### **General Principles**

Parents and carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- Present
- Absent

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- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

## **Attendance and Absence at The Boulevard Academy:**

Our expectations for attendance are high. Our target for attendance is 96% which is above the national expected attendance percentage of 95.4%.

### **Categorising Absence**

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the Principal and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents must advise the academy by telephone before 8.30 am for every day their child is absent from school with an expected date of return.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

**Illness** – Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Principal to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

**Medical/Dental Appointments** – Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Parents must show the appointment card to the school.

If an out of school appointment time is not possible, in order to minimise the loss in regards to learning time, please allow your child to attend school as normal, leave to attend any appointment and return afterwards.

**Other Authorised Circumstances** – This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement.

Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Principal. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted.

If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, then we will act to contact parents directly via telephone or home visits. In some occasions we will liaise with the Local Authority to support us in contacting parents. If continued lack of contact with Academy attendance team continues then the academy may take the student off the

academy's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2016. This means that the child will lose their place at the academy.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the academy will always request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrates' court.

**Religious Observance** – The Boulevard Academy acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration by written request by the parent of authorised absence. Such absence will be authorised up to a maximum of 2 days annually.

**Traveller Absence** – It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other students, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

**Late Arrival** – Registration begins at 8.20am, and students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause.

**Unauthorised absence** – Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Principal.

Example of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Having hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for holiday/training day
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays

### **Deletions from the Register:**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, students can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age

- In custody for more than four months
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the school has tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after the school has tried to locate the student
- Death of a student

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Boulevard Academy believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of academy staff, trustees, parents, students and the wider school community.

#### **As such, the trustees will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
- Regularly review the academy's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that all attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree academy attendance targets and link these to performance management within the academy
- Monitor the academy's attendance and related issues through half-termly reporting at Board Meetings
- Ensure that the academy has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used effectively to devise interventions and solutions

#### **The academy staff will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with students and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole academy ethos which reinforces good attendance e.g. good teaching and learning experiences that encourage students to attend and achieve
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to identify and address issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England 2016 and other attendance related legislation is complied with

- Report the academy attendance and related issues through half-termly reporting to the trustees
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Documents interventions used and record outcomes should legal proceedings be instigated

**Parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the academy before 8.30am if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, for every day of absence.
- Try to avoid making medical appointments during school hours
- Ask the academy for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the academy by taking every opportunity to become involved in their child's education; form a positive relationship with the academy and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home e.g. bedtimes, preparing uniform and kit the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances, send a written leave request to the Principal in good time

**Using Attendance Data:**

Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

The Attendance Administrator will provide weekly attendance data for each tutor group and termly reports to identify any student whose attendance falls below 96%.

Letters will be sent to parents with their child's attendance report to highlight the academy's concern and offer to support parents to address this.

The academy recognises that poor attendance may be an indication of difficulties in a child's life either at school or at home. Parents should make the academy aware of any change in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school. This will help the academy identify any additional support that may be required.

The Boulevard Academy also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to gain good attendance, e.g. those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs and those children who are looked after.

The academy will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance which include:

- Discussion with parents and students
- Trustee attendance panels
- Revisit the Home School Agreement
- Referrals to support agencies

Support offered to families will be centred on the child and planned in discussion with both parents and students.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the academy will use legal sanctions.

### **Legal Sanctions:**

**Penalty Notices** - (The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2013) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the Principal
- A student has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve

A Penalty Notice gives each parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid with 28 days, reduced to £60 is paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

**Prosecution** – Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The academy will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by

the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

**Parenting Contracts** – (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003), A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.