Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Aims

Morecambe Bay Academy recognises the clear link between the attendance and punctuality and the attainment of pupils. The aim of this policy is therefore to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance for individual pupils, vulnerable groups and the school as a whole.

We also recognise that promoting good attendance and punctuality prepares pupils for the disciplines of adult working life. In order to achieve this, all members of the academy have an important contribution to make. The policy contains strategies that identify the ways in which we can all contribute to improving attendance at the academy and the roles of all members of the academy in achieving this.

Guiding Principles

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at our academy, with an expected target of 97%.
- To raise the profile of attendance and make it a priority for staff, pupils, parents/carers and the Governing Body.
- To ensure the provision of appropriate guidance and support for parents/carers, pupils and staff.
- To develop and monitor clear procedures for maintaining accurate registers.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data in order to target attendance related issues.
- To develop a framework within which all staff can work to provide a
- consistent approach to raising levels of attendance using relevant agencies as appropriate.
- To provide a safe and caring environment where each pupil can engage in all opportunities offered.
- To work with pupils and their families to ensure every pupil has good attendance and punctually.
- To have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.
- See Appendix 2 for COVID-19 related information

Creating a culture of 'good attendance' at Morecambe Bay Academy

- A no excuse to attendance management with all members of the academy having responsibility for improving individuals and whole academy attendance.
- Morecambe Bay Academy will have a solution focused approach to overcoming barriers and improving attendance.
- Letters/text reminders of the importance of good attendance, celebrating successes – each half term.
- Website updates to include – clear link to policy, procedures and expectations.
- Every assembly will have welcome slides including focus on attendance –
- form attendance figures, form of the week, form of the half term (receive form prize – attendance trophy).
- Termly Celebration assemblies to include 100% attendance.
- Notice boards updated weekly of whole year group attendance figures and form attendances.
- Individual pupil names listed half termly where attendance is 100%. These
- pupils will enter a 'random' prize draw each half term which is drawn in assemblies.
- Postcards/texts/emails/phone calls home for positive attendance.
- 'Attendance Mondays' will be a theme for attendance where tutors will promote the importance of good attendance and hold individual conversations with pupils relating to their attendance figures during tutor time (Tuesday's for year 7).
- Posters promoting good attendance to be displayed in each form room and across the school including staff offices.
- Focus weeks for raising attendance throughout the year.
- Attendance will be a standing agenda item on all pastoral meeting schedules.

Expectations of parents

- To ensure their child attends the academy full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the academy for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see overleaf).
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- To immediately contact the academy by phone (01524) 410207 on the first day of any absence giving clear reasons.
- Send a note with the child on return to school and provide medical evidence of illness.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the academy on each day of absence.
- Parents/Carers are ultimately responsible for their son/daughter attending the academy regularly. (Education Act 1996).
- Attend meetings at the academy arranged by the school attendance team to discuss concerns regarding attendance.

- To inform the academy without delay if they have concerns about any aspects of their children's education they feel are hampering their attendance.

Expectations of staff

AIMs (Attendance Improvement Managers)

Responsibility for following the systems of intervention, monitoring PA pupils and keeping the attendance intervention spreadsheet up to date. Weekly meetings with Assistant Principal/Attendance Manager will involve analysing year group data provided by AIMS and attendance spreadsheet to ensure all pupils have received appropriate level of intervention. Effectiveness of intervention will be analysed weekly during these meetings.

Key tasks:

- Check and chase registers period 1 in addition, recording lates and taking calls/messages for pupils absent that day. Priority for those on vulnerable list.
- First day contact via text period 2. Follow up calls for non- response/unsatisfactory reasons for absence during this period. Period 4, check and chase p.m. registers.
- Monitoring of PA s against targets and administration of stage letters, panel meetings, PN period 4 onwards.
- Make arrangements to ensure that parents/carers who wish to take their child out of the academy during term time are contacted and the potential consequences explained. Seek permission/advice from the Principal.
- Ensure that the academy's official registers are in line with legal requirements and that any anomalies are reported to the Attendance Manager in first instance, during that working day.
- Provide weekly/monthly/termly data on attendance for the AP responsible for attendance within identified time frame of the request.
- Ensure stages of intervention are followed rigorously and outcomes recorded both accurately and timely in the intervention register, ready for discussion with AP in identified weekly meeting schedule.
- Work closely with the parents/carers of targeted pupils, forging positive and constructive relationships in order to engage parents/carers and provide support to get pupils to return to the academy at the earliest opportunity.
- Keep in weekly contact with long-term absentees, accurately recording outcomes of communication in the relevant attendance log and liaise with the Class Teacher/Head of Faculty/Year Leaders and SLT lead to ensure that effective reintegration strategies are used, identifying 'catch up' needs and work is provided for study at home during the absence where applicable.
- Contact parents/carers where absences have remained unexplained despite previous intervention seeking and securing relevant evidence to 'authorise' the absence.

- Prepare detailed and accurate cases for court referrals. Liaise with the Court Officer to initiate proceedings and follow identified protocol.

Form tutor:

- Ensure that registers are taken accurately within first 5 minutes of tutor time and are maintained.
- Mark lates accurately issuing detention through Synergy, clearly communicating the sanction with the pupil.
- Chase up absence notes from returning pupils, communicating requests with parents/carers through journals/email/telephone calls and inform the Year Leaders on a weekly basis if no note is returned after reminders.
- Encourage good attendance through constant reinforcement of individual and class targets during 'Attendance Mondays', offering encouragement and creating a
- competitive environment where pupils want to be the best attending form in the year/academy.
- Update and maintain form notice board in relation to attendance and other pastoral issues and distribute awards/certificates where appropriate.
- Monitor attendance within the form and use short-term attendance reports and
- targets where there is any deterioration and celebrate improvements with pupils and parents/carers.
- Liaise with the Year Leaders and AIMs as early as possible where there are issues of attendance with individual pupils, groups within the form or the whole form.
- Deliver tutor time materials with enthusiasm and create a safe and welcoming
- environment for all pupils. Forge positive and mutually respectful relationships with all pupils within the form creating a sense of belonging.
- Provide appropriate pastoral support to individual pupils as directed by Year Leaders.

Year Leaders

- Using weekly, half termly and termly data generated by AIMs, monitor carefully the attendance of pupils within the year group, taking note of any patterns amongst pupils from particular groups identifying and overcoming barriers.
- Take appropriate steps to support identified cohorts of pupils and parents/carers to reverse the trend of absence, identifying and implementing any relevant pastoral support, closely and accurately monitoring and measuring impact of support against attendance data.
- Liaise with the AIMs to ensure attendance systems are being followed and monitored rigorously and pupils with poor attendance and their parents/carers are receiving appropriate levels of support and challenge.
- Allocation of one period per day in conjunctions with AIMs to chase non-attendance, conduct home visits and hold individual conversations (reviewing progress against targets set) with

pupils with attendance concerns on a weekly basis, communicating outcomes with parents/carers, accurately recording outcomes.

- Lead tutors to create positive culture of promoting and celebrating good attendance.
- Share information through weekly tutor meetings monitoring the attendance rates of forms within the year, taking action alongside Form Tutors where particular forms or individuals within a form are identified as having poor attendance.
- Monitor/mentor pupils who have been identified as those with deteriorating levels of attendance, using monitoring cards, short term targets and other strategies to improve attendance.
- Meet weekly with the Vice Principal with attendance being the priority standing agenda item.
- Foster a positive attitude to school attendance within the year through assemblies, notice boards and constant reinforcement with pupils.
- Liaise with parents/carers on matters relating to their child's attendance.
- Effectively manage resources (finances) to overcome identified barriers with improving attendance i.e. alarm clocks, PE kit).
- Implement sanctions, in line with the school behaviour policy, where there have been
- instances of truancy, whether from individual lessons or whole days.
- Lead on complex cases including being lead professional on CAFs and chairing
- TAFs.

Class Teacher

- Take accurate register within first 5 minutes of the lesson during silent starter activity.
- Mark any pupil that is late and note minutes late issuing and communicating sanction in line with the academy behaviour policy.
- Plan and deliver lessons that are differentiated to meet needs of class and engage the learners providing suitable stretch and challenge, conducting assessments and providing timely feedback.
- Implement the academy's behaviour policy, creating a safe, orderly and purposeful learning environment where all pupils have a sense of belonging.
- Implement rewards and sanctions consistently and develop respectful relationships with pupiuls
- If a pupil is absent for more than one lesson, liaise with Year Leaders to send work home or utilise Synergy classwork/course facility if appropriate especially when a child is excluded from the academy.
- Where pupils have been absent, ensure the work that is missed is caught up – class notes are complete through providing handouts to be 'stuck in' or by photocopying
- another pupil's work.
- Acknowledge and celebrate a return from absence to further provide a sense of

- belonging within the class.
- Proactively liaise with the child's Form Tutor or Year Leaders if there are any concerns.

Subject Leader/Faculty Directors

- Developed Schemes of Learning and Assessment in place allowing all pupils to be able to access their curriculum.
- Support class teachers in implementing the rewards and sanctions consistently and fairly and consistently applying the T&L and Behaviour policies.
- QA T&L and absence catch up work is complete through learning walks, work scrutiny, pupil voice.
- Support class teachers in ensuring any work missed through absence is caught up.
- At each intervention cycle, QA catch up work is complete.
- At each Endeavour cycles, QA pupil progress against attendance (PA pupils).

Careers Leader:

- Raise aspirations of all pupils who are referred by Year Leaders and include in all one to one interviews, referencing each child's attendance record, the importance of good punctuality and good attendance both in the academy and for all Post 16 pathways.

Assistant Principal:

- To lead on whole school attendance and directly line manage Attendance Manager and AIMs.
- Weekly meetings with Attendance Manager to QA daily/weekly actions.
- Meet weekly with Vice Principal to discuss most vulnerable pupils (PA) and those on verge of PA and coordinate interventions alongside other pastoral issues.
- Present attendance data to SLT and governors when requested.
- Continual review of attendance policy and procedures.

Vice Principal:

- Meet weekly with AP to QA attendance systems etc.
- Meet weekly with Year Leaders and AP to discuss all pastoral issues with attendance as a standing agenda item with a focus on Year group figures, figures by form and at an individual pupil level.
- Review/monitor impact of interventions and coordinate strategies
- Full knowledge and understanding of all complex cases.
- Support Assistant Principal in presenting attendance data to relevant stakeholders.

Principal:

- To make judgement on holiday/special absence requests.
- To meet weekly/fortnightly with Vice/Assistant Principals to have robust discussions on whole

academy/year group/individual pupil attendance data and review of provision to support 'good' attendance.

SLT:

- To be aware of those on vulnerable list whilst on call.
- Ensure pupils are at timetabled lessons in 'good time' whilst on call.
- Involvement and objective QA of interventions surrounding chronic PA pupils.
- Discuss attendance at readmission meetings and set appropriate targets as part of
- readmission process.
- Continually review curriculum provision to ensure pathways are appropriate in meeting the needs of all pupils 7-13.

Thresholds and interventions:

Dependent on attendance figures (by session) pupils will be divided into three subgroups requiring three distinct waves of intervention. Each subgroup will be RAG rated on an attendance spreadsheet with interventions clearly flagged.

All parents/carers of pupils with an attendance of 90% and below for 2019/20 have received a letter expressing our concern, highlighting the fact that their attendance will be closely monitored from September and any absences will be unauthorised
without medical evidence.

- <95% - WAVE 1: All pupils will receive a stage one letter once their attendance falls below 95% or on the second day of absence during the first half term. The stage one letter is a letter which states our concerns and notifies pupils and parents/carers that attendance will be monitored. Pupils will be set with targets to improve attendance up to the expectation of 97% and any pastoral support required will be identified and implemented.

- <92% - WAVE 2: All pupils whose attendance falls below 92% or following a third day of absence during the first half term will receive a stage two letter. This letter will clearly state that all further absences will be unauthorised unless accompanied with medical evidence. Continued pastoral support will be given and attendance monitored, once attendance the expected target of 97% no further action will be taken.

- <90% - WAVE 3: Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% or on the fifth day of absence in the first half term will receive a stage three letter. Pupils below 90% will receive day one home visits where possible where there are unsatisfactory reason for absence or a pupil is particularly vulnerable list.

Attendance Meetings

Following the **first** unathorised absence, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Attendance Manager to discuss their absence and they will be requested to sign an attendance contract.

Following the **second** period of unathorised absence, parents/carers will be invited to attend a second meeting with a Year Leader to discuss absence.

Following the **third** period of unauthorised absence, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with a member of SLT.

Dependent on complexity of need the CAF process may be started and TAFs held with Year Leaders identified lead. Engagement with external agencies sought.

Punctuality

- The gate at the rear of the academy will be closed at 8.55 am and pupils must enter the school using the front gates after this time.
- Any pupil arriving after 8.55am will be met at the front gates by a member of staff and issued with a S4 late 1 hour after school detention on the following day – pupils will be given a late slip/card.
- Pupils must keep this card and show it to the teacher in period 1. If the pupil fails to present a late card they will receive a 'late' S3 detention.
- Repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers. Repeated lateness after the
- register has closed may be dealt with in the same way as absence. Parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice or even prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

Leave of Absence

Any requests for leave of absence will be strongly discouraged. Requests for absence will be declined unless the parents/carers are able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances:

- Parents/Carers are strongly discouraged from taking their children on holiday during term time All requests for leave of absence will be declined unless parents can evidence exceptional circumstances which is at the discretion of the Principal.
- Requests for holiday leave during exam times will not be authorised under any circumstances.
- Parents/carers must apply for leave of absence using the academy's application form which can be requested from the academy office or downloaded from the academy's website. Applications must be made at least 2 school weeks in advance.
- If a pupil fails to return from an agreed period of absence, investigations will be made by staff

(telephone calls/home visits by the pastoral team and Attendance Improvement Officer).

- If the academy's investigations fail to make contact with the parents/pupil the case will be referred to the Children Missing Education Team who may, after further investigation, inform the academy that the pupil may be removed from roll.
- Penalty Notices will be used in cases where an application for leave of absence is refused and the pupil is subsequently absent during the dates originally requested. Parents will be warned of potential consequences when an application for leave of absence is denied.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the academy has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the academy can do this.

Parents/carers should immediately contact the academy by phone (01524) 410207 on the first day, by 9.00 a.m., of any absence giving clear reasons. This should be followed up by a note on the child's return.

Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:

- Illness
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
- days of religious observance
- study leave involvement in a public performance

Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:

- looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
- birthdays
- family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not normally be approved).
- special occasions, where the academy does not agree that the absence should be granted.

Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should, where practically possible, come to the academy before the appointment, sign out and return to the academy after the appointment. Confirmation of all appointments by way of appointment card, letter or appointment slip must be provided for any absence to be authorised. If medical appointments are attended at the start of the day, causing the pupil to arrive late to school, confirmation of the appointment (as above) must be provided or a late detention will be issued.

Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a pupil's absence, the academy will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.

Children Missing Education

The academy (Attendance Lead) will notify Lancashire's Children Missing Education Team when pupils have missed 10 consecutive school days without permission (or sooner if school are aware that the pupil is not going to return e.g. moved out of area) via the CME referral form.

The academy (Attendance Lead) will complete CME9 removal from roll form and/or provide Lancashire (offroll@lancashire.gov.uk) with the relevant details where a pupil has been removed from roll and a start at a new school has been confirmed or where the CME Team has advised the academy that removal from roll is authorised.

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 brought into force Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 which empower designated LA Officers to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

The LA has prime responsibility for developing the Code of Conduct (protocol) within which all partners named in the Act will operate. Circumstances in which a Penalty Notice may be issued include:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave of absence in term time
- Unwarranted delayed return from an extended leave of absence (without academy agreement)
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed.

A minimum evidential requirement of fourteen (14x half days) sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil across any 2 terms during the school year and/or ten (10 x half days) school sessions lost in the current term may also trigger the process. This is not an exhaustive list and each case will be considered individually.

A Section 444 Prosecution will be considered when:

- A pupil's attendance is less than 65%
- There has been a lack of response to PNs- such as two already used in an academic year.

Appendix 1

DfE ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS (adopted September 2006, and amended Feb 2013 and Sept 2015)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES
/	Present (AM)	Present	
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Off-site Educational Activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
C	Leave of absence authorised by the	Authorised absence	
D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment	Not counted in possible attendances	
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	
G	Family holiday (NOT authorised by the school or days in excess of	Unauthorised absence	
H	Family holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence	
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
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 supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence	
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not yet on admission register	Not counted in possible	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible	

Appendix 2

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

There are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19) - these absences will be categorised as 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Governments expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance codes

Pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X.

Examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they will be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. Code X will only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last

for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.

In all cases of self-isolation, we will ask parents to inform us immediately about the outcome of a test. We will not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.