



THE HARMONY TRUST

Attendance Policy

Trust policy

Additional information – available in each Academy

Academy specific procedures

Academy specific letters

Description	By Whom	Date
Established	Greenhill / TM	13/2/15
Reviewed	TM	10/8/16
Approved	D of S	15/9/16
Reviewed	TM	31/7/17
Reviewed	WM	11/10/17
Approved	Trust Leadership Team	27/11/17

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Our Aim

At the Harmony Trust we are committed to establishing a positive, supportive and safe environment where children feel valued. We aim for all our children to achieve to their highest potential and excellent attendance, along with punctuality, is fundamental to ensure every child succeeds. We aim to safeguard the interests of every child, promoting their welfare and opportunities. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring excellent attendance and punctuality are achieved.

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks

Definitions

The Harmony Trust defines “absence” as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

The Harmony Trust defines an “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the academy has granted leave.

- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the academy has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy have granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

The Harmony Trust defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

The Harmony Trust defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for whatever reason.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Statutory registration codes must be used (see appendix A)

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents / carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for the pupil’s absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent / carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration – England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application has been made in advance and the Principal of the academy considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Principals no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. Whilst the Principal will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family **chooses** to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child.

If leave of absence is **taken without the request having been agreed**, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the LA will instigate legal proceedings against the parent / carer in the Magistrate Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) all our academies will, after making appropriate checks, report all children Missing from Education to the Local Authority. The LA has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Key roles and responsibilities

- The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures.
- The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- The Board of Trustees has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Trust's complaints policy.
- The Principal of each Academy will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures.
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time.
- Parents and carers will be expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that pupils attend school every day.
- Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

Registers are taken twice a day and are reviewed by the attendance officer. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then there will be a phone call home to check on why a child is not in school. Where necessary a home visit will be undertaken.

Attendance records are kept on the Academy Management information system. Daily, weekly and termly attendance is monitored. Where appropriate, parents / carers will be notified when their child's attendance drops. If the attendance drops below 90% the pupils is deemed a "persistent absentee" and closer monitoring and support will be undertaken.

Returns of academy data are made annually to the Department for Education and benchmark data exists to compare our academies locally and nationally.

Our academies set attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Academy senior leadership team and the Trust Leadership team. Attendance data is sent to the Board of Trustees.

Specific Guidelines regarding Attendance

Rewarding Good Attendance

We expect every child to come to school on time everyday. We reward good attendance with special recognition certificates and prizes where appropriate at particular stages through the academic year. Each academy has their own attendance rewards system.

Designated staff within school work hard to promote good attendance and punctuality through the use of reward charts and attendance monitoring.

Absence procedures

- Parents/carers must contact the academy as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- A phone call will be made to all parents / carers of children where no contact has been received in order to ascertain the reason for absence. This will be completed on each day of absence unless specific reason is known.
- Alternatively, parents/carers may call into school and report to the school office where, if necessary arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Principal, Head of academy or other senior leader in school.
- If pupil absence drops below 90%, the local authority Attendance Officer will be informed.

Contact information

- Parents/carers must provide accurate and up to date contact details.
- Parents/carers are responsible for updating the academy if the details change.

Attendance Officer

- If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the local authority Attendance Officer who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.
- If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the local authority Attendance Officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

Lateness

Registers are taken twice a day- once at the start of the morning and again at the start of the afternoon session. The times of each academy's school day is found in appendix 2.

Term time leave

- At The Harmony Trust, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, Principals no longer have the discretion to authorise holidays during term time.
- Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example, bereavement or serious illness.
- Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
 - Immediately before and during assessment periods.
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence.
 - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 per cent (10%) for any reason.
- If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave of Absence Request Form' and any request can only be authorised where there are 'exceptional circumstances'. All absence taken in term time MUST be authorised by the Principal. A request for Leave of Absence form is available from the school office and must be completed. The Principal will then speak to the parents/carers personally about their request and explain that 'holidays' during term time are classed as unauthorised. Parents/carers may lose their child's place on the school roll if the child does not return within five days of the agreed date of return. Parents / carers should not book travel before speaking to the Principal.

Religious Observance

- The Harmony Trust will try to ensure that families are able to celebrate key religious festivals without it affecting their child's education. The holiday pattern will be modified, where possible to allow religious days (e.g. Eid) to be a school holiday when large numbers of our pupils are affected. Where this is not possible, specific decisions regarding time off for religious observance will be made and shared with parents well in advance.

Appointments

- As far as possible, parents/carers should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Where this is not possible, an appointment card should be shown to school.
- If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they must be signed out by a parent/carer.
- Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Persistent Absence

An individual child whose attendance is under 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised) will be closely monitored by the Principal and designated member of staff, a letter from the Principal will be issued regarding our concerns about their attendance.

Persistent Absence is recorded half termly and sent to the Local Authority and the Trust for monitoring purposes. The academy will inform the Local Authority of any child who has been absent from school without the school's permission for 10 days or more.

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off-site or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, such as school residential trips, day visits to secondary schools or curriculum enrichment activities at local secondary schools are marked as present.

Appendix 1 – Absence Codes

/\	Present	I	Illness (not medical)	P	Approved sporting activity	W	Work experience
B	Educated off site	J	Interview	R	Religious observance	#	Planned whole or partial school closure
C	Other authorised circumstances	L	Late (before reg closed)	S	Study leave	Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision)	M	Medical / Dental	T	Traveller absence	Z	Pupil not on roll
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)	N	No reason yet provided	U	Late (after register closed)	-	All should attend/ No mark recorded
H	Holiday (agreed)	O	Unauthorised (not covered by other code)	V	Educational visit or trip		

Appendix 2 – Academy specific information

	Alt	Cavendish	Greenhill	Northmoor	Richmond	Westwood
School day starts am	8.50am	8.50am	9am (doors open at 8.15am)	9am	9am (doors open at 8.15am)	Nursery 8.45 Rec, KS1, KS2 9am
Child deemed late – before register closed (L)	Before 9.30am	After 8.50am	9am	Between 9.am and 9.05am	9.05am.	Arrived after 9:05 or 1:20pm
Children deemed late – after register closed (U)	After 9.30am	After 9am	after 9.10am	After 9.06am	After 9.06am	Arrived after 9:05 or 1:20pm
Afternoon session starts	Rec – 1pm KS1 12.50 Y3&4 12.40 Y5&6 1.30	1.10pm	1pm (EY & KS1) 1.15 (KS2)	KS1 1pm KS2 1.15pm	Nursery 12.30 KS1 1pm KS2 1.15pm	Rec / KS1 1.00 KS2 1.30