



# **Medeshamstede Academy**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Managing the Attendance and Absence of students**

Document updated by	Kiera Brueseke-Palmer
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**This document is informed by:**

The Education Act 1996,2002 and 2011

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Amendment Regulations 2006, 2007, 2012 & 2013

The Childrens Act1989 & 2004

DFE Working Together to Improve Academy Attendance (Guidance) Sept 2022

DFE Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance

DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Statutory Guidance 2023

DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance Sept 2016

DFE Supporting Students at academy with Medical Conditions Guidance

Regional Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocols and Early Help Pathways

DFE Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend academy because of health needs Guidance

DFE Guidance Summary on responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (Feb 2023)

DFE Support for students where a mental health issue is affecting attendance: Effective Practice example (Feb 2023)

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## 1. Introduction

Medeshamstede Academy recognises the importance of every child accessing their right to education and the part that good attendance and punctuality plays in enabling students to achieve their potential.

The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in supporting good academy attendance so that all students are safe and able to participate fully in the life of the academy. To enable them to learn and achieve, so that they may enter adulthood and their wider community successfully.

All staff (teaching and support) at our academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent academy attendance and will work to provide a welcoming and supportive environment where all members of the academy feel secure, listened to and valued to prevent barriers to attending. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives education and, where a child has been enrolled at an academy, they must ensure the child has regular attendance. It is important that parents/carers work with the academy to discuss barriers to attendance, as permitting absence from an academy, without a good reason, is an offence and may result in prosecution.

Medeshamstede Academy is committed to working collaboratively with families and other agencies via in academy support and Early Help Pathways, ensuring the best outcomes for students.

Medeshamstede Academy recognises that any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Additionally, that any student's absence also disrupts teaching routines and as such may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Medeshamstede Academy use a system of recognition and incentives to recognise the effort students make in achieving the best attendance and punctuality possible, by celebrating and rewarding good and improving attendance.

## 2. Definition of Good Attendance and Attendance Expectations

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court made it clear that 'regular attendance' shall mean attendance in accordance with the academy rules; Under this judgement **a child should attend every day the academy is open to them unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this**. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the academy rules and not deemed 'exceptional' will be recorded as unauthorised.

The expectation is that all students will aspire to achieve 100% attendance with a minimum of 96%, unless there are exceptional reasons for absence. Where alternative appropriate education is in place, due to barriers in attending the academy, the same expectations of attendance applies in terms of engagement with the provision.

## 3. The Law Relating to Attendance and Safeguarding

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:

*'the parent of every child of compulsory academy age shall cause him/her to receive efficient*

*full time education suitable:*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at academy or otherwise”*

The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to provide advice for academies, parents/carers and students on matters relating to student attendance and, where all other interventions from both internal and external agencies fail to improve attendance of a student, to bring prosecutions against parents/carers.

Persistent and severe absence from the academy is considered a safeguarding concern. A student may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the academy regularly. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State, with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone’s responsibility and, within Medeshamstede Academy, promoting the welfare and opportunities of students includes promoting good attendance, behaviour management, health and safety, access to the curriculum and anti-bullying. This is reinforced by the Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance (KCSIE) which states that children being absent from the academy, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing in education, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect and may be a sign of criminal exploitation. It may also indicate mental health problems where early intervention is essential.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of academy staff. Medeshamstede Academy is committed to working collaboratively to inform parents/carers about a child’s attendance and work with families to offer support, where attendance is a concern.

**To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in the academy, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress
- Celebrate and reward good attendance

**4. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the Academy**

Legal Action is always a last resort but may be used where:

- A single unauthorised absence event of at least two consecutive academy days (four consecutive sessions). When calculating consecutive academy days, weekends, bank holidays and Term Time breaks are discounted, ie a Friday and Monday in term time are considered consecutive academy days for the purpose of legal processing
- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a minimum period of any eight academy weeks, this is usually more than one instance of absence (eg multiple single days of absence but a single unauthorised absence event of at least two consecutive academy days (four consecutive sessions) can be used. A maximum of three penalty notices may be issued in any academic year
- Persistent late arrival at academy, after the register has closed, contributes to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above (**registers should be closed after a period of**

**time agreed by the academy but no more than 30 minutes after they have opened. We recommend that this should be no more than 20 minutes)**

- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification
- Students identified in a public place whilst suspended from academy (during the first five days of the suspension period) without reasonable justification may also be subject to a penalty notice

A meeting must have been attempted with the parents/carers to discuss any absences and a warning letter will have been sent to each parent/carer. The parents/carers will be required to ensure that their child attends over a 30-academy day period (15 days for Y11 in the spring term) where there should be no unauthorised absences. If there are any unauthorised absences within this period, each parent/carer must be notified, then a penalty notice may be issued to each parent/carer from the point of the first unauthorised absence.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

## **5. Understanding types of absence and Persistent Absence**

Every half-day absence (one session) from the academy has to be classified by the academy (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from the academy for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in academy time, emergencies or other exceptional causes.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off academy unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the academy day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at academy too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance

**Persistent Absence** is where a student misses **10%** or more of their education within a specific period of time (whole academic year, term or for a minimum eight week period) for whatever reason – Authorised or Unauthorised. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the persistent absence level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. Persistently absent students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (LA), Academy Attendance Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

**Severe Absence** is where a student misses 50% or more of their education within a specific period of time (whole academic year, term or for a minimum eight week period) for whatever reason – Authorised or Unauthorised. Absence at this level is very likely to be detrimental to the students educational prospects and full parental support and co-operation is essential

to ensure the student and family access a 'whole family plan' and appropriate support and education is accessed. Where all avenues of support fail but severe absence continues for unauthorised reason this may constitute neglect, depending upon the circumstances, and both the academy and LA should consider whether safeguarding issues require a children's social care assessment.

Where a student continues to have long term persistent absence (below 85%) they will be under the review of the welfare team, who will make regular contact via telephone. If necessary, the welfare and safeguarding team will contact other agencies to help support the student and/or family, in an endeavour to increase access to learning and improve attendance.

Whilst any child may be absent from the academy because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the academy. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the academy, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Child Missing in Education (CME) is where a child's whereabouts becomes unknown and the academy do not have reason to believe the child is not attending for illness or unavoidable causes. Section 10 of the Children's Act 2004 places a duty on Local Authority and Academies to follow procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries to locate the child. A CME is a serious safeguarding concern and if there is reason to believe a child is in imminent danger, or risk of harm, a referral to Childrens Social Care (or the police if appropriate) will be considered.

Where CME is suspected, reasonable enquiries must be carried out within 10 days of a child being absent from education. The academy will endeavour to locate the child in the first instance however, if by day 10 of unauthorised absence, where no contact has been established with the parent/carer, a child must be reported to the LA as a child missing in education.

Once a child has been reported as CME they will be held on roll until their destination academy has been confirmed, or their 20<sup>th</sup> day from the last day of attendance if their destination remains unknown prior to deletion, following LA confirmation to do so. The child's details will be logged onto the academy to academy (S2S) DFE Portal to enable another academy to 'claim' the child once located. Where the child is located and the address confirmed within academy area, the child will remain on roll and attendance legal procedures will be considered for non-attendance.

## **6. Absence Procedures, Registration and Punctuality**

### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact the academy office student absence line as soon as possible on the first day of absence Call **01733 821 403**

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day, and every following day, of absence if we have not heard from you
- Contact emergency numbers held on our database
- Undertake a home visit if no contact is received from you
- Call 101 (Police) and request a safe and well check, if all other attempts to contact you fail

- to get a response
- Invite you to discuss the absences with us
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of penalty notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

**How we manage lateness:**

The academy gates open at **8.40 am** and registration starts at 8:45am.

Registers are marked by **9.00 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.05 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that will indicate that your child is in the academy building, but will be marked with a 'U' Code which is recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to academy on time.

**End of the Day Arrangements:**

The academy gates will open for dismissal at 3:00pm ready for the end of the academy day at 3:10pm. Students being collected early disrupts lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and will impact attendance and schooling.

**7. Request for absence during term time**

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in academy time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in academy time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made to the Principal at least 4 weeks prior to the requested absence. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the academy will consider the circumstances of each application individually. It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the academy and/or different from that agreed by the academy will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

**8. Attendance Leader and Attendance Support in the Academy**

A senior member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the academy's work in promoting regular and improved attendance. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will;

- ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the academy.

- ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the full Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good academy attendance)
- ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

**The people responsible for Attendance in academy are:**

**Charlie Smith – Principal**

**Kiera Brueseke-Palmer – Attendance Leader, DSL, Assistant Principal-Pastoral**

**Deke Ringrose – Pastoral and Welfare support, DDSL**

**You can contact the academy to discuss attendance concerns on 01733 821 403**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the academy at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the academy may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council, Academy Attendance Team. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

**Rewards and incentives** - Attendance has a very high profile at Medeshamstede Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and academy meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. Registration certificates are sent to all parents in the spring term and with annual reports at the end of the academic year, so that parents are aware of their child's attendance percentage. A weekly attendance certificate is awarded to the class with the highest attendance in each phase, which is displayed prominently in academy. 100% attendance certificates are awarded at the end of each term and those children who have 100% attendance for the whole academic year are awarded a special prize.

**First-day calling** - Medeshamstede Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence (see 6.2).

**Letters to parents** - A letter is sent to parents when a student's attendance falls below 95% and there is no permissible reason for this. This letter states that the academy will monitor the student's attendance in line with Local Authority guidelines (A1) If no improvement is seen over a half term a second letter (A2) will be sent to parents to attend a meeting with the Attendance Leader. The A2 letter will remain in place until attendance improves.

## **9. Deletion from Register**

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to the academy by the time that registration ends on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of absence the academy is permitted to delete your child's name from their register. This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from academy for a period of not less than 20 academy days and:

- (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);



(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student(s) is/are unable to attend the academy by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

**Further Useful Information:**

[Attendance Policy \(greenwoodacademies.org\)](http://greenwoodacademies.org)

[Academy attendance - Peterborough City Council](#)



Child's Name: ..... Class .....

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Medeshamstede Academy.

Student ..... Date .....

Parent ..... Date .....

**Leave of Absence Request Form**

<b>Child's Name:</b>		<b>D o B:</b>	
<b>Class:</b>		<b>Year:</b>	
<b>Main Parent(s)/Carer(s)</b>			
<b>Surname:</b>		<b>Surname:</b>	
<b>First Name:</b>		<b>First Name:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth: (for legal purposes in the event of prosecution)</b>			
<b>Date of Birth:</b>		<b>Date of Birth:</b>	
<b>Address and Postcode:</b>			
<b>First written language if not English:</b>			
<b>Telephone contact No's:</b>			
<b>Siblings / Siblings School (if different)</b>			
<b>Siblings / Siblings School (if different):</b>			
<b>Additional Parent/Carer (Please complete if parents live separately)</b>			
<b>Surname:</b>		<b>First Name:</b>	
		<b>D o B:</b>	
<b>Address and Postcode:</b>			
<b>Telephone contact Nos:</b>			

<b>Start date of absence:</b>	
<b>Date of return to school:</b>	
<b>Exceptional circumstance resulting in this request for absence, WITH EVIDENCE:</b>	

I/We understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied and my/our child is absent during this period. I/we understand that a fine will be payable **per child, per parent of £120 if paid within 28 days but reduced to £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days.**

**(All parents/carers to sign where appropriate)**

<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Full Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Full Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

To be completed by the school:

<b>Total number of days requested:</b>	
<b>Leave of absence AGREED / DECLINED for the following reason/s:</b>	
<b>Date of decision letter sent to each parent/carer:</b>	
<b>Headteacher:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
	<b>Date:</b>

