



# Leigh Academy Rainham

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

<b>Version</b>	2
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<b>Principal</b>	<b>Alex Cramlington</b>
<b>Attendance Lead</b>	<b>Sharry Mackie</b>

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## 1. Introductory statement

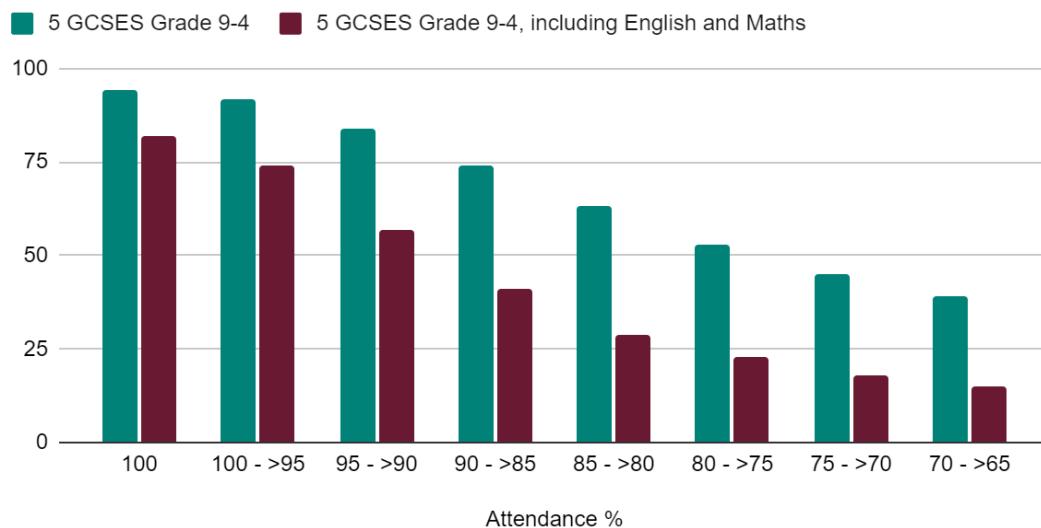
The Academy has a statutory responsibility to ensure that every child on-roll is safe by recording their daily attendance at morning and afternoon registration and monitoring their physical and emotional well-being during the day. It is a fundamental ethos of the Leigh Academies Trust to celebrate success and achievement and all Academies in the Trust actively promote and encourage 100% attendance by all of our students.

All children have the right to access education every day of the academic year. This enables them to engage, progress and achieve in all aspects of Academy life. Positive life outcomes are fundamentally linked to excellent attendance and punctuality. We know the importance of all of our students benefiting from the 190 days of learning they are entitled to, to ensure they make progress and achieve the results they should. If a school can improve its attendance by 1%, this can result in a 5-6% improvement in attainment.

Parents and carers have a vital role, as well as a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and punctuality. As an Academy, developing effective links with parents is a high priority and we are committed to regularly conveying to parents, carers and students the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality. It is an offence in law to permit absence without good reason and may result in prosecution under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Leigh Academy Rainham adheres to the principles and guidance as set out in the DfE publication, “Working together to improve school attendance.” August 2024, the link is [here](#). The Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is Ms Sharry Mackie.

## *Impact of Attendance on KS4 Attainment (Data from the Department for Education)*



## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 The Academy will:**

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Roll Call / Registration procedures and receive appropriate professional development with regard to these.
- Complete Roll Call accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, including registration during every lesson of the day. Each Roll Call is equal to 'a session'.
- Stress to parents / carers the importance of contacting the Academy on every day of absence, and provide effective mechanisms for them to make contact with the Academy.
- Promote the importance that full attendance and punctuality play in achieving the best possible educational outcomes.
- Promote race, disability and gender equality within all practices and procedures related to attendance and punctuality.
- Through consultation days and reporting systems, ensure that parents, carers and students are made aware of the attendance pattern and provide an opportunity to discuss how it may affect learning and offer supportive strategies to improve attendance.
- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued.
- Support students who have difficulty accessing education through the work of the Academy support, Family Liaison Officer, Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer and Local authority, Early Help / Family Solutions, Schools Liaison Officer/Attendance service.
- Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.
- The academy will conduct home visits for attendance reasons and to support families where necessary. It is standard practice to conduct a home visit for families where there has been 3

or more days of absence. Keeping in touch, maintaining relationships as well as checking upon the welfare of our students is an important part of our pastoral and safeguarding care. In the case where medical evidence has been provided and this is not a repeated pattern of absence, a home visit **may not always** be required after 3 days and a welfare phone call may be conducted instead.

## **2.2 Parents / Carers will:**

- Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.
- Contact the school whenever the student is absent on the first day and on each day after, of absence.
- Provide proof of medical appointments and medical treatment if required to do so by the Academy.
- Avoid removing their child during the Academy day.
- Attend attendance meetings with members of staff from the Academy when requested, working in partnership with the Academy to put in place strategies to improve attendance

## **2.3 The Local Authority will:**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with school staff in resolving any problems regarding absence together. This is nearly always successful. If unauthorised absences continue then the school may refer to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA) Medway Council.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the Principal creates an offence in law. For students whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the School, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

First offence- The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates' Court.

Second offence (within 3 years)- the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates' Court.

Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years)- the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

### 3. Attendance Procedures

#### 3.1 The Academy Day and Roll Call

Academy Day	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri Timings 2025-2026	Wednesday Timings 2025-2026
<b>Arrival &amp; Breakfast</b>	8.00 - 8.25	8.00 - 8.25
<b>Registration Lineup</b>	8.30 - 8.35	8.30 - 8.35
<b>Period 1</b>	8.40 - 9.40	8.40 - 9.40
<b>Period 2/Break</b>	9.40 - 11.00 Year 7/8/9 Break 9.40 - 10.00 Year 10/11 Break 10.40 - 11.00	9.40 - 11.00 Year 7/8/9 Break 9.40 - 10.00 Year 10/11 Break 10.40 - 11.00
<b>Period 3</b>	11.00 - 12.00	11.00 - 12.00
<b>Period 4</b>	12.00 - 13.00	12.00 - 13.00
<b>Lunch/Form Time</b>	13.00 - 14:10 Year 7/8/9 Lunch 13.00 - 13.35 Year 10/11 Lunch 13.35 - 14.10	13.00 - 14:10 Year 7/8/9 Lunch 13.00 - 13.35 Year 10/11 Lunch 13.35 - 14.10
<b>Period 5</b>	14.10 - 15.10	

- The statutory recording of attendance and absence at the start of each session (am / pm) is known as Roll Call. This is undertaken within the first 30 minutes of the morning (8.30am to 9.00am) and afternoon sessions. Wherever possible this Roll Call is taken 'electronically' by register calling.
- The recording of attendance and absence to all other lessons will be known as Registration.
- Designated staff will be reminded of their legal duty to complete and submit Roll Call at the appropriate time and using the correct registration codes (Appendix 1).
- Registers for Roll Call will officially close 30 minutes after the start of the am and pm session. Students who arrive anytime between 8.30am and 9.00am will be marked as late. Students who arrive late after 9am will be marked as an unauthorised absence, 'U', for the morning session.
- The afternoon session for registration is undertaken between 12.00pm and 12.30pm. Any student arriving after 12.30 will be marked as late.

#### 3.2 Informing the Academy of Absence

If a child is absent Parents/ Carers must:

- Contact the Student Absence phone line prior to 8.15am on the first day and subsequent days of absence, advising of the reason and likely length of absence. 01634 412440 or email [attendance@leighacademyrainham.org.uk](mailto:attendance@leighacademyrainham.org.uk)

- Contact the Student Absence Email Address to provide any necessary evidence to authorise the absence. This needs to be completed as soon as the evidence is available. The Academy will not chase up medical evidence, this is a parental responsibility to provide it. Wherever possible, all medical appointments should be taken outside of school time. Medical evidence can be an attached photo, screenshot or photocopy of:
  - letter from medical professional,
  - appointment card with student name date and time,
  - copy of prescription note,
  - copy of prescribed medication sticker on side of medicine packaging
- Request a discussion/meeting with the Academy's Attendance Officer to discuss extended absence due to illness or if there are any other concerns affecting school attendance.
- If your child is off for 3 or more consecutive days, on the 4th day of absence, you will be required to provide medical evidence. If this is not provided, the previously 'authorised absence' will be re-coded as unauthorised.

Absence with reason reported- such as illness, medical appointment or in rare extenuating circumstances- the absence will be recorded as authorised. 'Authorised absence' is the academy acknowledging the reason for absence. It does not positively increase the student's attendance percentage to school and students should always endeavour to maintain the highest possible attendance to school.

**If the Academy is not informed of an absence, it will take the following action:**

Day	Academy action in relation to absence when the academy is not informed
1	Absence without reason- call made by Attendance Officer. Followed up with text and or email if unable to ascertain reason for absence via phone. The absence will be recorded as <b>unauthorised</b> .
2	The academy will endeavour to use all listed contacts to ascertain a reason for the student's absence from school if a reason has not yet been established.
3	The academy will continue to endeavour to make contact to ascertain a reason for absence.
4	If the student has not returned to the academy and is therefore absent for a 4th day, a <b>home visit will be conducted</b> unless the academy is entirely satisfied with the reason for absence. This measure is of particular importance if no communication has been received about the absence. If there are safeguarding concerns around the child prior to this absence, a home visit may be conducted sooner. Additionally, where necessary other external agencies may be contacted such as the police or Social Services.  Once a student has 8 sessions of absence recorded as unauthorised, 'Cause for Concern' and 'Medical Evidence' letters will be sent to the parent. Medical evidence will be required for every absence from then on. Additionally, a meeting will be arranged. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence will trigger a referral to the

	Attendance Advisory Service, AASSA. AASSA will decide upon the prosecution route and a Penalty Notice Fine may be issued.
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### **3.3 Unauthorised Absence**

Absence will be deemed unauthorised where:

- Parents or carers do not provide medical evidence to support absence due to ill health when requested by the Academy.
- Parents or carers remove students from school for holidays or trips during term time
- Students arrive at the Academy after the am 'Roll Call' period has closed or leave prior to the afternoon 'Roll Call'
- Parents or carers keep children from the Academy unnecessarily
- Parents or carers do not communicate the reason for absence to the Academy
- A students truants and are absent without the parents' or carers' knowledge

Holidays in Term time will never be authorised. The Academy is closed for 14 weeks a year when parents can take holidays and travel abroad. Where there is an exceptional circumstance resulting in a student being absent during term time, a request can be made to the Principal in writing or via email who will then consider the application and respond in writing. The Principal's decision is final. Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions due to holiday will be referred to AASSA for Holiday Penalty Notice Fines.

### **3.4 Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Students arriving late cannot start the day effectively, may disrupt lessons, and encourage absence or poor punctuality in others. Our Academy is located in a very accessible part of Rainham with the majority of students living within walking or cycling distance, therefore traffic issues will not be a valid excuse unless a major incident has taken place. Where students are late to the Academy, with no valid reason the following punctuality protocols will be followed:

- The Academy day starts officially at 8.30am and we expect students to be through the gate and on their way to their morning registration lineup by 8.25am.
- Any student who arrives through the gate after 8.30am will report to the Student Services Manager at the gate. They will take their name and will be issued a late mark ('L') anytime between the registration period of 8.30am and 8.40am. Any student arriving after 8.40am will be required to enter the building via the main reception where the same information will be collated.
- Lateness after 9am results in an absence mark for the morning session which, without valid reason, would be deemed unauthorised (U).
- A student's first late offence will automatically be issued a C1, 30-minute detention.

- A student's second late offence in a term will be sanctioned with a C2, 60-minute detention and phone call home. Persistent lateness can lead to a meeting with the College Pastoral Team.
- Poor punctuality resulting in unauthorised absences (U) e.g after 9am, is classed as irregular Academy attendance and is dealt with accordingly. This may mean that parents or carers could face the possibility of legal action.
- If you know your child is going to be late for a specific reason please call the Academy before 8:30am, following the same procedures for absence.
- If a student is returning to the Academy following an absence during the day they will need to arrive for registration between 12.00pm and 12.30pm, or they would be marked as absent for the afternoon session.

### **3.5 Leaving Site During the Day**

- Medical Reasons - The student should seek medical attention from our on-site first aider. With permission, a student may take time out of a lesson to see if their condition improves. The first aider may feel that it is not appropriate for the child to be in the Academy due to poor health. Permission from the Head of College must be granted before a child leaves the site due to feeling unwell. First aid staff will contact parents or carers to gain permission to send the student home, in some cases the parent will be required to collect their child from the Academy
- Students must NOT contact parents during the Academy day and request collection or permission to leave
- Prior to leaving the Academy site, all students must report to the main office and be officially signed out. If Parents/Carers are unable to collect their child and they are of secondary school age, and have given verbal permission for the student to leave the Academy, they will be issued with an exit pass which confirms the student has permission to leave the site.
- Post 16 students who wish to leave the site during the Academy day must adhere to the signing out procedures determined by the Director of Learning for Post 16.

## **4. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring of attendance is systematic and rigorous to ensure there is a strategic approach to improving a student's attendance where it is below expected and impacting on their progress:

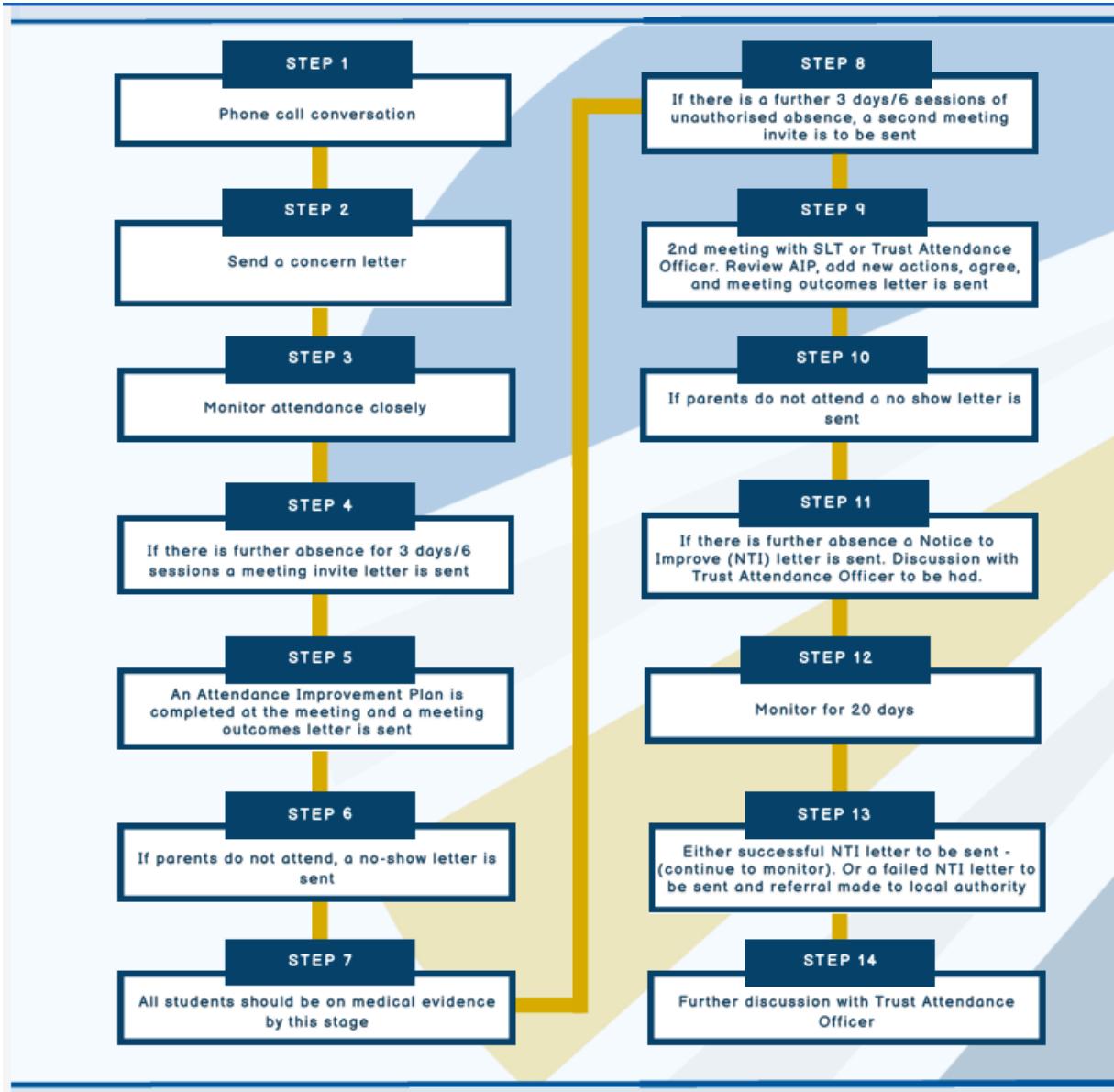
- Academy attendance data will be published for consideration at every Academy board meeting. It may also be submitted to the Trust Academies Standards Committee as required.
- Attendance Data will be produced regularly and distributed to the Senior Leadership Team to enable interventions to occur.
- The relevant Senior Leader and Student Support Manager/pastoral support staff or Support Mentor within each college/Academy will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their college/Academy.
- The Head of each College has responsibility for the attendance figures, and actions to improve attendance within their Academy/college.

- A Designated Principal/Senior Leader has overall responsibility for the publication and monitoring of the attendance data for the whole Academy.
- Attendance data will be collected via the DfE Census three times per academic year.

## 5. **Strategies for Improving Attendance and Punctuality**

- The school's attendance lead is Ms Mackie (Assistant Principal) who will work alongside our attendance officer Ms Carter to monitor attendance across the school.
- The person responsible for leading attendance in each college will meet regularly with relevant staff and make them aware of significant attendance trends and patterns and seek their support to address any issues with students, parents / carers and other stakeholders. This may include the Family Liaison Officer, Student Services or pastoral staff, tutors, College Leadership teams, the Trust Attendance Officer, Local Authority Attendance Officer and other staff as appropriate.
- Attendance, punctuality and its impact on learning and progress will be a key area for discussion between Tutors, Student Support, College Leadership teams and parents / carers during consultation days.
- A range of positive strategies will be used to reward individual students and groups for outstanding and/or improved attendance.
- Regular attendance meetings will be held between individual College leadership and the Local Authority Attendance Officer.
- Student attendance data may be shared with Parents/Carers, Local Authority, Early Help / Family Solutions, School Liaison Officer/Attendance Service , Children's Social Services, Police, relevant LEA's, Ofsted and the DfE.
- We understand the importance of working with all stakeholders to improve attendance within the academy and we follow the guidance from the DFE 'Working together to improve school attendance.'

We endeavour to prevent a student becoming a PA by applying our early intervention strategy and the steps below:



## **6. Absence of Leave during Term Time**

The Academy may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Principal of the Academy. The Principal of the Academy will make the final decision of acceptance or refusal. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

The Government and Local Authority states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. If your decision remains unchanged and you decide to take your child out of school, it will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a penalty notice.

From September 2024, the DfE amended the Education (penalty notices) (England) Regulations 2007, so that the Penalty Notice issued will be £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates' Court. In this instance a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

First offence- The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates' Court.

Second offence (within 3 years)- the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates' Court.

Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years)- the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

## **7. Persistent Absence Referrals**

A student is deemed to be a PA (Persistent Absentee) if their attendance falls below 90%. The Academy will expect 100%, with students below 96% being considered at risk of referral to AASSA. Students who fall into either of these categories, will be monitored by the Academy attendance teams and the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Research by the DfE shows that once a student falls below 85%, it is unlikely that they will return to good attendance habits and move out of the Persistent Absence category. A student who is PA is more likely to underachieve both socially and academically.

The academy will work with families to endeavour to prevent a student becoming PA. Additionally, they will continue to work with families to support a student in coming out of PA. If however, attendance continues to decline a referral to AASSA will be made.

## 8. Penalty Notices

The Academy follows set procedures set out by Medway Council for issuing penalty notices. Medway Attendance Service takes responsibility for issuing Penalty notices and taking other legal actions following referral by the Academy. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

### 8.1 Unauthorised absence Penalty Notices:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence.
- Parents/Carers and students are supported by the Academy and local authority to overcome barriers to regular attendance. Sanctions of any nature are used where parental cooperation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem.
- A penalty notice can only be issued as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that its use will secure improvement.
- A penalty notice can only be issued where a student has been absent or late for a period/periods of time and the absence or lateness has not been authorised by the Academy.
- After the Academy has taken steps to resolve attendance concerns/warned the parent/carer of possible Penalty Notice referral, the Academy will refer directly to the local authority, to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence where the student has ten unauthorised sessions of absence (including Holiday (G) / Unauthorised Absence (O) / Unauthorised Late (U)) may result in a request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court. If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, then the charge will be at a flat rate of £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. A statutory attendance referral may be made to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies AASSA at Medway and may result in prosecution.

[Here](#) is the link for the DFE - Working together to improve school attendance guidance.

### 8.2 Exclusion:

A penalty notice can be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours of days 1-5 of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

**Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.**

## **9. Removing a Student from the Academy Roll**

- We will only enter pupils on the admission register where we have received written confirmation that the person with control of the pupil's attendance has accepted the school place.
- Where the local authority has offered a place at the school but no written confirmation of acceptance has been received from the person with control of the pupil's attendance, we will write to the local authority requesting evidence in writing and will not enter the pupil onto the admission register until this has been received. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the offer of a place will be withdrawn and offered to another pupil in accordance with our Admissions Policy.
- We will enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name will be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before, or at the beginning of the first session on that day.
- Where a pupil does not attend on the agreed date, we will send a letter to the person with control of the pupil's attendance asking them to confirm in writing within 10 school days that they wish to take up the place. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the pupil's name will be removed from the admission register and the place offered to another pupil in accordance with the admission policy.

### **9.1 School Transfer**

If parents/carers transfer their child to another school or Academy, they should advise the Attendance Advisory Officer and the relevant head of school, as a matter of priority, providing all necessary details, including any new address (if relevant) and the school or Academy the child is transferring to.

When in the process of a school or Academy transfer the child must continue to attend Leigh Academy Rainham until a start date has been agreed with the new school or Academy. If the Academy does not receive this information and it is evident the child has left Medway, he or she becomes a 'Child Missing Education' (CME). Any child in this category is reported to the Child Missing Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under safeguarding legislation and ensure the pupil is on roll within another Local Authority or abroad.

### **9.2 Elective Home Education (EHE)**

If parents or carers take the decision to educate a child at home, they must tell the Academy of this in writing – this letter or email should be addressed to the Principal and include the date of decision to home educate and a brief explanation of the reasons for EHE. The Academy will offer a meeting to attempt to resolve any issues first but should a letter be received, they will advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with parents or carers. They will only be removed from roll once the LA has confirmed receipt of the required letter. If an EHE request letter or email is not received, the student remains on the Academy roll and action may be undertaken following irregular or non-academy attendance procedures, again this could lead to prosecution or an instant fine under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## Appendix 1 DfE Registration Codes

- / Present (AM) \ Present (PM)
- B Educated off site (NOT at an alternative provision must be face to face in person teaching)
- C Other Authorised Circumstances
- C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time Timetable (only if effects AM or PM mark)
- D Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)
- E Excluded (no alternative provision made)
- G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
- J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority (section 19 referrals)
- L Late (before registers closed)
- M Medical/Dental appointments
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- P Approved sporting activity
- Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements (delayed bus pass)
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- T Traveller absence
- U Late (after registers closed)
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience
- X Non-compulsory school age absence
- Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law -( coloured red on NHS chart of advice that states cannot attend school)
- Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Z Student not yet on roll
- # School closed to students