



Leigh Academy Rainham

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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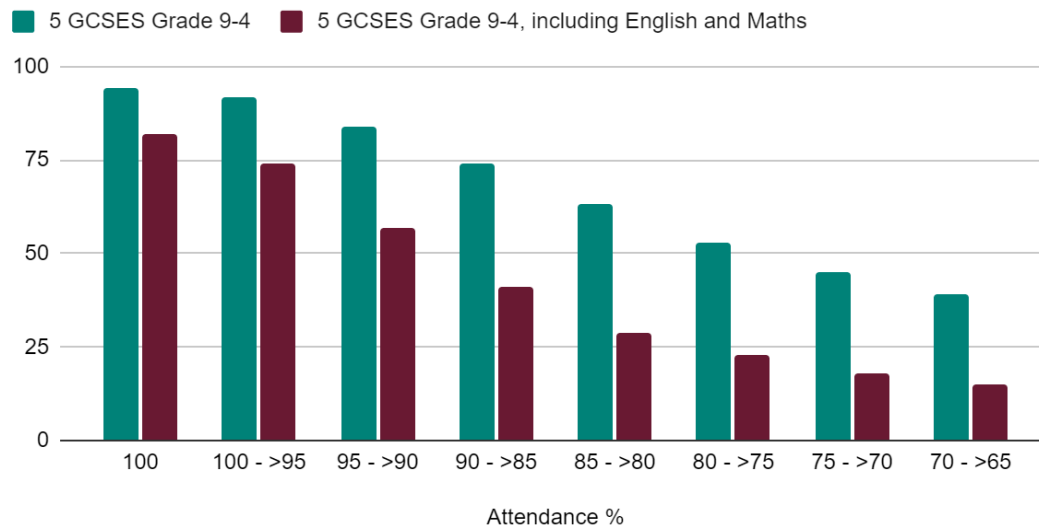
1. Introductory statement

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.

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.
- 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, Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer and Local authority, Early Help / Family Solutions, Schools Liaison Officer/Attendance service.
- Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.

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:

1) The parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice, which carries a fine of £60, per parent/carer, per child. If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, it rises to £120 per parent/carer, per child. If not paid at all, court action will be initiated.

2) The Local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment. Unauthorised Absences could lead to a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

3. Attendance Procedures

3.1 The Academy Day and Roll Call

	Academy Day (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri)	Wednesday
Arrival	8.15 - 8.30	8.15 - 8.30
Lineup	8.30 - 8.40	8.30 - 8.40
Period 1	8.40 - 9.40	8.40 - 9.40
Period 2	9.40 - 10.40	9.40 - 10.40
Break	10.40 - 11.00	10.40 - 11.00
Period 3	11.00 - 12.00	11.00 - 12.00

Period 4	12.00 - 13.00	12.00 - 13.00
Lunch	13.00 - 13.30	13.00 - 13.30
Form Time	13.30 - 14.00	13.30 - 14.00
Period 5	14.00-15.00	
End of day lineup	15.00-15.10	
After School Clubs / Detentions	15.10-16.10	

- 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 1.30pm and 2.00pm

3.3 Informing the Academy of Absence

If a child is absent Parents or 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.
- Contact the Student Absence Email Address (attendance@leighacademyrainham.org.uk) 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 the Academy is not informed of an absence, it will take the following action:

Day	Academy Action if Absence Not Reported
1	Absence without reason, call made by College's Student Support Manager
2	If no response to day 1 call, 2nd day call by College Student Support Manager. Academy will attempt to contact ALL contacts if unable to contact main parent / carer. If family is supported by partner agencies e.g. social care, they will be contacted.
3	If no response to day 1 and 2 calls a text is sent from College Student Services Manager. Home visit arranged and a letter is sent warning 10 unauthorised sessions will result in referral to the Attendance Advisory Service (AASSA) and requesting contact from parents
4	If no response a meeting with Form Tutor / Director of Pastoral etc is scheduled
5	If no response, referral to AASSA who decide the prosecution route and a Penalty Notice can be issued if a student reaches a total of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.

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 registration period has closed
- 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.

A student who has 10 unauthorised sessions across a 6 week period may be liable for a fixed penalty notice by the attendance advisory service.

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 be expected to enter via Reception and report to the Student Services Manager at the Cloakroom. They will take their name and will be issued a late mark ('L') anytime between the registration period of 8.30am and 9.00am.
- 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. The third offence will trigger a C3 SLT detention. Persistent lateness can lead to a meeting with the Academy Attendance Officer.
- 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 1.30pm and 2.00pm, or they would be marked as absent for the afternoon session.

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 (in the sick bay) 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 their College Student Services 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. This requires the Parents/Carers to contact the relevant College Student Services soon as the student arrives home.

- 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 Mr Sandland (Assistant Principal) who will work alongside our attendance officer Mrs Unsworth 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 Student Services or pastoral staff, tutors, Directors of Learning, College Leadership teams, AAP (Attendance Advisory Practitioner) 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 AAP
- 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.'

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'.

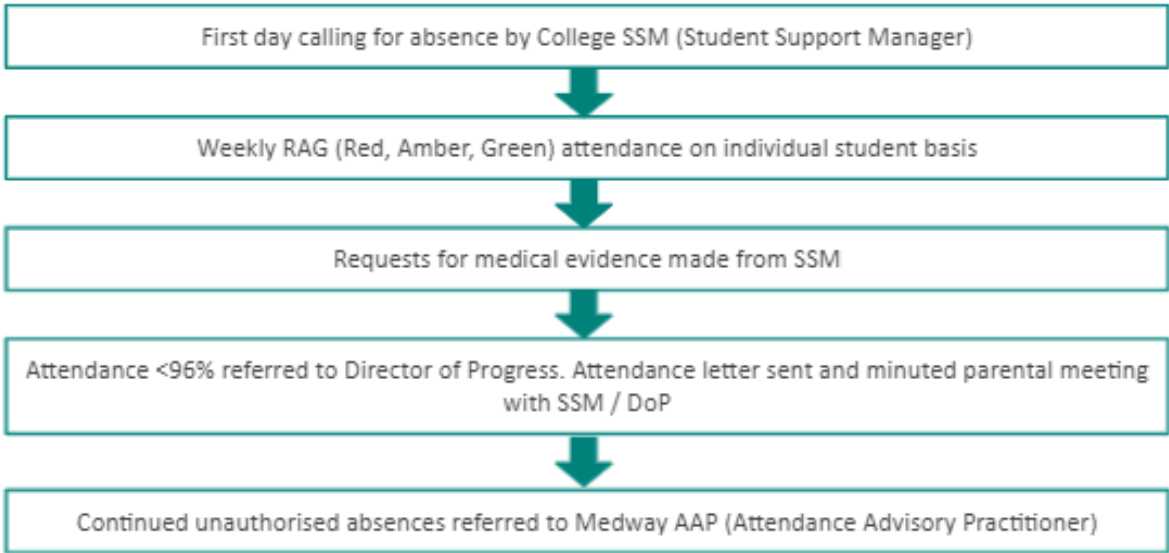
The Government and Local Authority states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. If your decision remains unchanged and you decide to take your child out of school, it will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a penalty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

From September 2013, the DfE amended the Education (penalty notices) (England) Regulations 2007, so that each parent/carer who receives a Penalty Notice for taking their child out of school during term time has to pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Please be aware, non-payment of penalty notices may result in further legal prosecution.

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 by the local authority. Students who fall into either of these categories, will be monitored by the Academy attendance teams and the AAP.

Analysis of attendance by year groups will identify strengths and areas for intervention to further improve attendance. A referral may be made to the local authority attendance service should attendance remain poor after Academy and Trust interventions.



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 been absent for 10 or more half day sessions without authorisation during a 6 week period – these do not need to be consecutive.

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.

Where penalty notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

9. Removing a Student from the Academy Roll

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.

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.

Removing a Pupil from Roll

As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from academy roll due to continued serious absence.

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

Appendix 1 DfE Registration Codes

- / Present (AM) \ Present (PM)
- **B** Educated off site (NOT at an alternative provision)
- **C** Other Authorised Circumstances
- **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)
- **H** Family holiday (agreed)
- **I** Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
- **J** Interview
- **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
- **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 / absence due to COVID-19 while awaiting a PCR result
- **Y** Enforced closure /School/LA Transport unavailable / widespread disruption to travel
- **Z** Student not yet on roll
- **#** School closed to students