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ATTENDANCE POLICY (PRIMARY)

Accord
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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Name	**Position**	**Signature**	**Date**
A Lancashire	Chair of Trustees	A Lancashire	02 January 2026
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Document History

Version	Date	Author	Note of Revisions
1	December 2024	S Gibbs/ J Tucker	Full re-write of Attendance Policy to reflect DfE changes in guidance for schools. Reference to Managed Placements protocols.
2	July 2024	A Warboys	Re-write to reflect updates to the DfE guidance.
3	July 2025	Primary Headteachers	No changes
4	January 2026	Primary Assistant Headteacher	Updates to incorporate the opening of MPA's Two-Year-Old Provision.

1. Context and Aims of the Policy

From 19 August 2024 the DfE has issued updated guidance that includes a new national framework for issuing penalty notices that is designed to help ensure consistency across the country. The guidance can be found from the following link:

DfE - Working together to improve school attendance (from 19 August 2024)

The Academy and Trust Values underpin the fundamental reasons for our policies and processes. This Attendance Policy should be read in conjunction with the academy's Behaviour and Exclusions Policy and Safeguarding Policy. This policy is informed by the DFE guidance for schools and academies and in regard to the statutory guidance documents on parental responsibility measures and children missing in education (CME).

The academy culture of success promotes high standards of behaviours, attendance, and engagement. The Trust believes all pupils have the right to the best education possible and in ensuring this, we adopt an inclusive approach for all.

We believe that every day counts in pupil's education. Regular attendance is essential for young people to achieve their maximum potential.

Pupils should attend the academy each day and on time to ensure that they have a regular routine to support their learning. This focus also prepares pupils for the world of work, where attendance and punctuality are crucial. We want all pupils to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the academy.

Evidence shows that there is a link between poor attendance and underachievement. We want all pupils to fulfil their individual potential and for this to happen, we need parent /carer co-operation and support in ensuring that we have full attendance and excellent levels of punctuality. This is best achieved by:

- Ensuring effective communication via the pupil planner, the My Child at School App (MCAS) and other sources individual to each academy.
- Ensuring parents / carers read and respect the Home / Academy agreement, in support of the academy's high expectations.
- Involvement in regular events, Parents' Evenings and contact with teachers and staff.
- Working effectively with the academy to support any interventions provided.
- Ensuring pupils attend daily and on time.

All staff across the Trust will work with young people and their families to ensure each pupil attends the academy regularly and punctually, to minimise absence of all kinds. This will be done through:

- Raising awareness of the effects of absence and lateness.
- Ensuring effective systems to monitor absence and to address any underlying barriers that pupils may face.

- Establishing effective systems for incentives and rewards that acknowledges the efforts of young people to improve their attendance and time keeping.
- Securing appropriate levels of challenge where there is a lack of priority given by young people and parents / carers leading to poor levels of attendance and punctuality.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) works as a link between home, the academy, other agencies and the Local Authority, in order to address attendance issues and ensure that all young people are receiving a full-time education. This involves explaining to parents / carers their legal responsibilities referring to other agencies, encouraging families to build good relationships with the academy and helping with academy transfers and admissions. The EWO may conduct home visits, get in contact via telephone or in writing and will work with other agencies such as Social Services and police.

2. Attendance in the Two-Year-Old Provision

This attendance policy is written primarily to address statutory requirements regarding pupils of compulsory school age (Reception to Year 6) and the legal frameworks for parental responsibility measures (e.g., penalty notices, court action) as outlined in the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

Children in our two-year-old provision are below compulsory school age. While regular attendance is still vital for their early development, socialisation, and educational progress within the EYFS framework, the formal legal duties and enforcement measures described in this policy (such as EWO involvement for legal action, or fixed penalty notices for holidays) do not apply to them.

Key Principles for Two-Year-Old Attendance:

- **Voluntary Basis:** The attendance of two-year-olds in our academy is voluntary and dependent on parental choice and funding eligibility (e.g., the 15-hour entitlement). Parents/carers are not legally required to ensure their child attends.
- **High Value on Routine:** We strongly encourage consistent attendance to help children establish healthy routines and maximise their early learning opportunities. We communicate the value of regular attendance using the My Child at School App (MCAS) and direct communication.
- **Absence Procedures:** Parents of two-year-olds are still required to follow the absence procedures outlined in Section 2: informing the academy on the first day of absence with the reason (e.g., illness). This is crucial for safeguarding purposes (First Day Response) and ensuring the welfare of the child.
- **Authorised Absence and Illness:** We follow all guidance regarding illness and infectious diseases (e.g., sickness/diarrhoea 48-hour exclusion). Absences for illness are authorised, and we maintain flexibility for parents of very young children who may

need to keep them home for minor ailments that would not necessarily warrant absence in older pupils.

- **Holidays in Term Time:** While we request parents avoid holidays in term time to maintain routine, there are no penalty notices issued for this age group.
- **Support Over Sanction:** If a two-year-old child has significant periods of absence, our focus is entirely supportive. The EYFS Leader or key worker will engage with the family to understand any barriers to attendance (e.g., health concerns, transport issues, anxiety) and offer support, potentially involving early help services or health visitors, rather than escalating to EWO legal measures.
- **Registration Codes:** All attendance and absence for two-year-olds are recorded accurately using the appropriate national attendance codes for monitoring purposes.

3. Attendance Registering and Absence Procedures

Registration takes place at the beginning of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. All Trust establishments use national attendance and absence codes to record and monitor attendance. Morning registration closes 30 minutes after the start of the day after which time the pupil will be marked as absent.

Inform the academy on the first day of your child's absence from school, and again on any subsequent days. To safeguard your child, we need parental confirmation for **every day** of absence.

Parents should call the school office before the start of the school day to inform us if their child is going to be absent and provide the reason for this absence. If this call takes place before the office is open, parents should leave a voicemail message with all information required.

We send out a message to parents / carers when the register closes who can then reply by text message, MCAS message or voice message whichever is appropriate. This is followed up by telephone calls to ensure children are safe and well. This 'First Day Response' is done for any pupil expected to be in the academy but has not been marked as present.

This approach is NOT an alternative to parents advising the academy that their child will be absent. All parents / carers are still required to inform the academy of pupil absences on the first day by ringing the absence line.

Parents should ensure that they do not take their children out of school on holiday during term time. If this is unavoidable then a "special leave of absence agreement" must be obtained in advance from the school – please see our 'Holidays in Term Time' page on the academy website for full information.

4. Signing In / Out Procedure

For health and safety and safeguarding reasons, all pupils who need to leave site during the day need to be collected by a parent or carer who should sign them out at the school office. Where possible, evidence should be provided of medical appointments so that these absences can be authorised.

If pupils arrive late for school for any reason (even if authorised / pre-agreed) the pupil must be signed in at reception.

We ask that where possible, appointments are arranged outside of school hours but understand that this is not always possible. We will allow pupils to attend appointments but ask that they attend school before or after the appointment. Please notify the school office of any upcoming appointments and provide a note or an appointment letter / card to confirm the appointment.

5. Authorised or Unauthorised Absence.

Authorised absence is where the academy has agreed the reason for the absence and approved it. This approval can be in advance or agreed after the absence, where a satisfactory reason has been given and evidenced where appropriate. This authorisation is at the discretion of the Headteacher, based on the information provided.

Absences that may be authorised:

- Genuine illness or unavoidable medical or dental appointment
- Exceptional family circumstances
- Genuine religious observance
- Suspension
- Involvement in public or significant event approved by the academy.

Absences that may be unauthorised:

- To look after or visit a family member.
- Birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, or holidays.
- Days out for shopping, events, or trips.
- Arriving late, after registration has closed.

Absences which have not been appropriately explained or where the reason is not valid, will be treated as unauthorised.

6. Step-Outs, Managed Placements and Directed Learning.

Directing the education of the pupil, for a period of time, to a partner or local academy may include (although this list is not exhaustive):

- 1 or 2 days in a designated area.
- 6 or 12 weeks on an agreed timetable.
- A trial placement for a full transfer.

On these occasions, parents / carers will be informed, and it is then the parents / carers and pupil's responsibility for the pupil to arrive at the designated academy on time, dressed in full academy uniform, equipped for learning, and follow the expectations of the provider of the placement / Step-Out.

Following the successful completion of a period of time out of the academy, parents / carers will be asked to meet with Headteacher on return to the academy to discuss a re-integration.

7. Re-integration Timetable

As a re-integration tool to enable pupils to return to the academy following absence, a re-integration timetable may be appropriate. This will be agreed with parents / carers and be time limited to no more than a half-term per agreement in line with Local Authority guidance. This will be reviewed as the re-integration timetable progresses.

8. Rewards and Consequences for Attendance, Absence and Truancy.

8.1 Praise and Positive Recognition for good and improving attendance.

Good attendance and punctuality are part of the regular discussions between teachers, leaders, and pupils, and they play a significant role in our Positive Recognition and Attitude to Learning strategies. A full overview of our incentives and positive recognition can be found in our Behaviour Policy.

We have high expectations, and we support our pupils to meet those expectations; helping young people to develop personal strengths through our character education virtues so their hard work is recognised and that they achieve success. The Trust recognises the importance of rewarding excellent attendance and improved attendance.

Examples of praise and positive recognition for good attendance and punctuality could include, but are not limited to:

- End of term reward trip or event
- Positive phone call home

- Above & Beyond MCAS message
- Attendance Prizes
- Certificate
- Postcard
- Parental meeting
- Special mention in newsletter
- Praise Breakfast
- Afternoon Tea

8.2 What happens when we are concerned about your child's attendance?

Attendance is monitored daily with proactive actions taken to address instances of poor attendance before a student becomes persistently or severely absent. This forms part of our graduated approach to attendance with the aim of working in partnership to provide the support needed to remove barriers to attendance before the need to apply more formal measures.

Where we notice patterns of persistent poor behaviours in terms of attendance, this is to be brought to the attention of the Attendance Team who will then take timely steps to address. This may involve teachers having informal discussions with children or parents/carers to share concerns and encourage improvement.

Attendance and punctuality letters will be sent out to parents / carers when patterns of poor attendance or punctuality occur and attempts at informal interventions have had little or no impact. This can include warning letters and notifications of action the academy would be required to take if improvements are not made. Each communication with home would escalate where poor punctuality and / or attendance persists.

8.3 Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the academy strategy for improving attendance.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance.
    - Explain the help that is available.

  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence.
  - Review any existing actions or interventions.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

8.4 Penalty Notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the academy issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the academy will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks).
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil.
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution.
- Whether any obligations that the academy has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

8.5 Notices to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the academy may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

9. Holidays in Term Time

Families who would like to take their child on holiday during term time should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Whilst it may be considered by parents / carers that a holiday will be educational, the pupil will still miss the teaching that they would normally have received during the holiday.

The Department for Education allows a Principal / Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a holiday in term time only in "exceptional circumstances" If you consider that your request for a holiday is exceptional you will need to complete a request form that is available from the academy. Following receipt of the form the circumstances would be given strong consideration with a response provided as soon as possible. If the holiday is not considered

to meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances, and the holiday is still taken in term time, the absence would be recorded as unauthorised, and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

All holiday requests must be completed by the parents / carers who reside with the pupil / pupil and submitted to the academy at least 4 weeks prior to the start of the holiday.

As guidance for parents / carers it is important to note that holidays would not be authorised for the following reasons:

Availability of cheap holidays.

- Availability of the desired accommodation.
- Holidays booked as surprises by family members.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.
- Only time available due to work.
- Holidays would not be authorised under any circumstances during formal examination periods.

Any exceptional request for holiday absence will be considered very carefully.

10. Children Missing in Education (CME)

Should a pupil leave the academy without the parents / carers advising the academy which new school or academy the pupil is moving to, the academy will take action to trace the pupil within 10 working days.

The Trust works closely with Local Authorities and will escalate a concern of CME using the relevant reporting procedures. If families move away from the area or wish to transfer their child to another school or academy, they must inform us. Pupils cannot and will not be removed from roll until we receive notification that the pupil has another school place or where the Local Authority has been unable to trace the child and notify the academy to remove the pupil from roll.

11. Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School

Pupils returning to school from a period of absence are supported to return to school. They are offered a welcome on return from a trusted adult who will check in with them on arrival and throughout the school day. Furthermore, Teachers ensure that pupils are supported to catch up on any missed work so pupils do not fall behind their peers.

Where required other support will be put in place, on a case-by-case basis and depending upon the reason for absence.

11.1. Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Pupils who are absent due to complex barriers to attendance are supported to attend the Academy in several ways, based on a case-by-case basis including some of the following:

- Parent/carer engagement – by working closely and in partnership with parents, carers and family members, school leaders can gain a better understanding of any complex barriers to attendance. This understanding allows for bespoke support to be put in place.
- Pastoral Care – School can provide tailored support that focuses on a pupil's successful reintegration back into the academy.
- Providing pupils access to dedicated spaces where tailored support can be provided based on a child's needs.

11.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Pupils who are absent due to mental, physical ill health or due to a Special Educational Needs are supported to return to the academy on an individualised basis as academy leaders recognise that each pupil's circumstances and needs are unique to them.

- Individualised support may be put in place for each pupil to support their successful reintegration to school and this may include the following things:
- Providing the pupil with additional pastoral support either through 1-1 support or small group sessions.
- Putting in place a risk assessment to mitigate any potential issues arising from a mental or physical health need.
- Putting in place a reintegration timetable to allow a pupil to increase their attendance over time, and in a way that is manageable for them given their illness or needs.
- Making reasonable adjustments for the pupil based on their individual needs.
- Facilitating and/or support pupils to access support from external agencies or professionals where required.

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the academy will work in conjunction with the Local Authority to ensure that any further support outside of what the academy is able to offer, can be provided, as required.

11.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The Trust recognises that it can be difficult for pupils to return to education after a lengthy period of absence and as such pastoral support is put in place for pupils. This support ensures that pupils feel comfortable when they return to school and further to this, it allows for the identification of any further individualised support a pupil may need.

Academy leaders and teachers also take steps to support pupils who have missed considerable periods of time to 'catch up' on missed learning once a pupil has been successfully reintegrated into school.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. The Trust has adopted a consistent approach to monitoring attendance to intervene and offer support to pupils and families at the earliest opportunity.

12.1 Pupils

- Attend every day, every timetabled lesson, and on time.

12.2 Parents / Carers Responsibilities

- Ensuring their child attends the academy each day it is open, dressed in full uniform and ready for learning.
- Contacting the academy if their child is unable to attend.
- Providing their most up to date contact details.
- Only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and well in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around the academy day where possible.
- Proactively engaging with the academy with regards to any support that is offered to improve attendance.

12.3 The Academy Responsibilities

- Establishing and promoting a culture whereby pupils want to attend the academy, helping all stakeholders understand the benefits that good attendance brings.
- Ensuring that the academy has a clear attendance policy, with the attendance policy and procedures applied and monitored constantly.
- Having a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Promoting that attendance is everyone's responsibility and keeping the concept of academy attendance high profile within the academy community.
- Having robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Supporting all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, to attend the academy regularly.
- Helping to identify, overcome and remove barriers for good attendance and signpost support where needed. Where there is a lack of engagement and / or where support is not working, work with parents in a more formal capacity, involving the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.

12.4 The Trust Responsibilities

- Ensuring academy leaders and staff receive training on attendance.

- Making certain that academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Reviewing the Attendance Policy in accordance with its own internal procedures.
- Taking an active role in attendance improvement by monitoring attendance across the Trust, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils and intervening systematically where appropriate.