



# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## Attendance Policy

### Overview

If learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. At KWEST Multi Academy Trust, we will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement.

### Objectives

- To ensure that all learners attend school well.
- To ensure that all learners are punctual.
- To win the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- To keep good records of attendance through the academies' registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To investigate and act immediately where truancy is suspected or confirmed.
- To work effectively with the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
- To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement.

### Strategies for promoting good attendance and tackling nonattendance

The following is a list of possible strategies employed in our academies:

- All staff will draw to the Executive Headteacher's/Head of Schools' attention any absences that are cause for concern or suspicion;
- positive attendance activities may be introduced as and when required, such as attendance prizes, certificates and punctuality weeks to promote good attendance and punctuality;
- learners arriving late will be reported to the Executive Headteacher/Head of School and the Parent Support Advisor (PSA), who will keep a record of the times and occasions that a learner is late;
- where a learner is developing a pattern of 'occasional' absences the parent will be contacted to discuss the pattern of absences;
- the academy may hold regular meetings between the PSA and Executive Headteacher/Head of School to monitor absence records and meet with families to support them in getting their children to attend school regularly;
- where necessary the academies will contact the LA to take action against those unlawfully keeping learners from school;
- the Executive Headteacher/Head of School and Trust CEO will monitor attendance on a regular basis, and follow-up any concerns;
- the Trust and the academies follow the national policy which states that no term time holidays are to be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- the CEO will report to Trustees on attendance levels.

## Key Information

The Government changed the definition of persistent absence in September 2015 to below 90% attendance. Poor attendance could lead to prosecution through the magistrates' courts. The maximum fine is £2500 and/or 3 months in prison or the issuing of a Penalty Notice. Each academy can liaise with LA when necessary, over issues which may lead to prosecution or a fine.

### Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the academy has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell.
- Only the academy can make an absence authorised and Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from the academy without the permission of the academy, even with the support of a parent.

## Holidays

As per DfE guidelines, the Trust and its' academies do not authorise term-time holidays, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Holidays taken in term-time may, dependent on previous and current levels of attendance or circumstances, lead to referral to the Local Authority. The Local Authority could issue a fixed-penalty notice of £60 per parent per child dependent on the circumstances and attendance record of the child.

Exceptional Circumstances under which absences during term time may be authorised are:

- holidays funded by charities;
- parent serving in the Armed Forces or
- terminal illness of the child or immediate family member;
- specific needs relative to SEND.

Other factors will be considered by the Executive Headteacher/Head of School.

Parents wishing to apply for their child to be absent during term time must complete a 'Request for Absence Form' before the holiday date.

## Outcomes

The Trust and its' academies will do all it can to ensure that learners come happily, willingly and punctually to school to ensure that all gain the greatest possible value from their education.

## Monitoring

The individual academy attendance data will be monitored by the Local Governing Body (LIT), whilst the Trust Board will regularly monitor the whole MAT attendance and may take action when attendance at an academy is deemed a concern.

## Complaints

All complaints should follow the Trust complaints policy found on the Trust website.