



Walthamstow Academy

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Attendance Policy

Adopted by:	Walthamstow Academy		
Date:	January 2023		
Signed off by:	Emma Skae	Geoff Skewes	
Role:	Principal	Chair of Governors	
Review frequency:	Annually		
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Introduction

At Walthamstow Academy, we aim to promote excellent attendance because we know that attendance correlates strongly with wellbeing and achievement. We want our students to be learning in school, as long as it is safe and appropriate for them to do so.

We have well-established procedures for tracking attendance and then for intervening where it falls below our expectations. Our procedures celebrate good attendance as well as seeking to support where attendance is less than it should be.

This policy should be read alongside:

- WA [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- DfE guidance [Behaviour in schools \(2022\)](#)
- DfE [School Attendance Guidance \(2020\)](#)

Overview

The policy is based on the following principles:

- The academy will always act with the utmost care to ensure that there is an accurate register of attendance at all times.
- Teachers are responsible for submitting marks for the attendance register.
- The Attendance Team is responsible for checking marks are present and for producing statistics on attendance.
- Attendance should be, for individual students and as a whole school, higher than 95%
- Persistent absence is defined (in accordance with the DfE usage of this term) as being attendance lower than 90%.
- The Attendance Team are responsible for coordinating intervention where attendance is less than 95%.

Daily Attendance Procedures

Task	Time	Person Responsible
Contact the academy to inform us of any unplanned absence	By 8.20am	Parents
Take the morning register in form or assembly	By 8.40am	Tutors
Take P1 register	By 9.10am	P1 Teachers
Collate the attendance registers and parent messages to produce a list of students absent for no known reason	By 9.30am	Joy Gill
Send a text to all parents of students in Years 7-11 on the above list	By 9.30am	Joy Gill
Use Inentry to update Sixth Form attendance, then send message to parents of students in Years 12-13 on above list	By 9.30am	Emma Brady
Take P2 register	By 10.10am	P2 Teachers

Update registers according to replies from parents	By 10.30am	Joy Gill
Take P3 register	By 11.30am	P3 Teachers
Take P4 register	By 1.30pm	P4 Teachers
Take P5 register	By 2.20pm	P5 Teachers
Check inconsistent marks and correct if needed	Through Day	Joy Gill Elma Maala (Wednesdays)
Phone parents who do not respond to texts, record any instances where absence may indicate a safeguarding concern	Through Day	Joy Gill Elma Maala (Wednesdays)

Weekly Attendance Procedures

Task	Person Responsible
Attendance team meet once per week. Standing Items: i) Off roll authorisations ii) Concerning low attendance cases and actions agreed. iii) Review of current procedures with suggestions for improvement	Andrea Campbell chairs the meeting with Joy Gill, Hannah McAlpine and Emma Brady present.
Letters sent to parents where attendance is a concern, and a wave of intervention is in operation	Antonia Louisy as directed by Hannah McAlpine
The attendance of each student in the academy is reviewed for the week and considered over time. Every student whose attendance is under 95% is examined to look at causes for this. Notes are added to our attendance tracking document when needed.	Hannah McAlpine
Waves of intervention reviewed using latest attendance tracking document and students moved in or out of waves depending on the progress they have made with attendance.	Hannah McAlpine
Weekly Year Team attendance bulletin is produced and distributed to each year groups for dissemination in assembly	Hannah McAlpine

Waves of Attendance Intervention

Wave	Person Responsible	Description
1 – Letters and meeting	Hannah McAlpine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For students with 90-95% attendance. • Students are added to this wave if there is no single, compelling reason for their low attendance. • Letter is sent home explaining that we will be monitoring attendance over the period of one half term. • Parents receive a sequence of letters that make the legal status of attendance clear. The flow chart of letters is included in the appendix. • HME organises an encouraging text home when students in Wave 1 have good attendance over the course of a week • Students would move to wave 2 if their attendance dropped further -to below 90%.
2 – Year Team Intervention	Head of Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with attendance lower than 90% with no single, compelling reason for absence. • Heads of Year manage their caseload of students in Wave 2. They will usually delegate their wave 2 students to tutors, but in some circumstances may decide to work with the student themselves. • Students have a conversation at least once a week with the person they are assigned to. This conversation covers: any absence that week, actions taken to catch up, actions needed to avoid absence again. • After the sequence of letters and year team intervention, there is a parental meeting with Hannah McAlpine (DDSL). If there is no further improvement students move to Wave 3. • HME organises an encouraging text home when students in Wave 2 have good attendance over the course of a week.
3 -Child Missing in Education	Hannah McAlpine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For students with high levels of absence. This step does not apply to 6th form. • Hannah McAlpine manages this system and records actions on the master attendance spreadsheet. All these actions are requested by the academy but administered by Waltham Forest Child Missing in Education Service (BACME) We follow the process as per the flow chart in the appendix. • In extreme cases if there is still no improvement in attendance then we will make a referral to court for prosecution. If accepted, the parent/carers responsible for the student will be taken to court, prosecuted and may be

		<p>fined, or in extreme cases they can be sentenced to time in prison.</p>
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The academy uses two further, ad-hoc, interventions.

- **Fines** can be requested for parents where there are three or more days of unauthorised absence. For example, this may be a holiday within term time. Fines can also be requested for parents where there is general non-attendance. Any pupil who has ten unauthorised absences or unauthorised lates in any consecutive six week period can be fined. Fines are issued by Waltham Forest Council but requested by the academy. The academy considers each case of unauthorised absence or lates on its own merits, taking all known factors contributing to the absence or late into account before deciding whether to request a fine.
- **Home visits** are undertaken by members of the Pastoral Team where this is deemed necessary. A home visit will often be undertaken because we have been unable to speak to parents on the phone or have another reason to be concerned about the welfare of a student. Home visits always involve two members of academy staff.

Reporting to Parents

The academy reports attendance records to parents by:

- Providing attendance statistics on all engagement and exam performance reports sent home. This means all parents receive up to date attendance statistics via email at least twice per half term.
- Providing attendance statistics through the ‘Arbor Parent Portal’. This means that parents who are signed up to the portal can access live attendance statistics at any time.

If a parent wished to query any aspect of the school’s attendance record for their child, then they can do so by contacting Joy Gill.

Taking a register & actions if a student is absent

Staff at the academy with responsibility for taking registers are fulfilling an important legal duty. It is the academy’s expectation that all registers are:

- Taken within the first 10 minutes of a lesson beginning (see ‘daily attendance procedures’ above).
- Taken by the member of staff reading out each student’s name, and only filling in a present mark when they are certain the student has answered their name. The class should be in absolute silence whilst this happens so that the register is accurate.
- Filled in thoroughly, with students marked absent or late as needed. Absent marks should always be changed to late marks as any student arrives.

If a student is absent from a lesson during the day, but they have been present in all other lessons that day and no planned absence has been recorded in the register then they are to be considered missing in school. An email should be sent to Reception immediately. Reception will:

- Check to see if the student has a planned absence (for example a dentist’s appointment).

- If they do not, then Reception will call 'on call' who will search the academy for the student.
- 'On call' will update all staff involved once the student has been located.

Authorisation of Absence

Good attendance at school is vital for educational performance and wellbeing. The academy's view is that students should be in school if possible. There are rare occasions on which we will consider authorising absence for reasons other than illness, this includes but is not limited to the following examples: funerals, hospital visits to close relatives.

Medical appointments

Medical appointments should be booked outside of the school day wherever possible. If unavoidable, then the academy will require proof of the appointment in advance from parents and will take reasonable steps to ascertain that the proof is genuine (for example, by verifying the identity of the parent providing it).

Holiday – Holidays in term time are never permitted. Attendance at family celebrations such as weddings is considered as holiday. Where absence amounts to three or more school days because of holiday, the academy will request a fine be issued by Waltham Forest Council.

Compassionate leave – The academy will consider each request for compassionate leave on its own merit. We may require parents provide proof of their stated reason for the requested leave.

Part time timetable / phased returns - where there are medical / safeguarding grounds to support it, the academy can offer students a part time timetable or a phased return to school. Such arrangements are only ever made in conjunction with parent/carers. They are always temporary arrangements and are offered with the agreement of Waltham Forest Council.

Removing a student from the roll

Students will be removed from the academy roll in the following circumstances

- Where we have written confirmation from the parent/carer that they no longer wish their child to attend. In the case of the student moving to another UK school, we will require proof from the new school that they are joining the roll or from a local authority that they are attempting to place the student on a new school's roll.
- Where the student has not attended the academy for a continuous period of 20 school days without authorisation and the parent/carer has not been able to be contacted despite reasonable efforts to do so on our part.
- Where a student has been permanently excluded from the academy.