



# Attendance Policy

Reviewed September 2023 (updated)

Next Review Date: September 2024

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## **Aim(s)**

There is a strong relationship between positive attendance and achievement. We believe that every student will benefit from the education provided at Wilmington Academy and therefore regular attendance is crucial. The aim of this policy is to provide transparency, ensure consistency and facilitate regular attendance for every child, regardless of their age or background. The policy has also been created using the legal framework and recent DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

### **At Wilmington Academy we will ensure that:**

- Every student has the right and access to a broad and balanced education
- No student is deprived of their education opportunities by either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students
- Rapid action is taken, where necessary to ensure an improvement in attendance or punctuality

### **At Wilmington Academy we recognise that:**

- The vast majority of our students want to attend to learn, socialise with peers and fully prepare themselves fully to take their place in society
- Students and their families may require support at some stage in meeting attendance obligations and responsibilities
- Students who attend and are punctual, or make significant improvements need to be rewarded so this is recognised and encouraged
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers ensure their child's attendance at the academy as set out by law (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)

### **At Wilmington Academy we will encourage 100% attendance by:**

- Clear, consistent communication with parents/carers about importance of regular, prompt attendance
- Communicate with parents/carers to set improvement targets, when necessary, and share these with students and parents/carers
- Accurate completion of registers within the first 15 minutes of each lesson
- Contact parents/carers, usually by text, if their child is absent and no reason has been received
- Utilise external agencies, where appropriate, to help support students/families when necessary

## **Legal framework**

This policy has been created to include all requirements of the Department for Education's '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' (May 2022) and '[School Attendance](#)' (May 2022). It also refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on '[School attendance parental responsibility measures](#)' (Jan 2015). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties from all stakeholders: The Education Act 1996, The Education Act 2002, The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The Education (Pupil registration) Regulations 2006. This Policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Education Act 1996 states that: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient, full-time education suitable:

- a) to his age, ability and aptitude
- b) to any special educational needs, they may have
- c) Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**Wilmington Academy and the Leigh Academies Trust are dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and have set out this Attendance Policy accordingly.**

#### **Links with other policies**

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy and Marking & Feedback Policy
- Relationships, Health and Sex Education Policy
- LAT Policies: Attendance Policy, Uniform, Suspensions and Searching & Screening Policy

#### **Roles & Responsibilities**

##### **1. Kent County Council**

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, Kent County Council will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear to both parents/carers and students
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure that the Academy is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for the children who are educated off-site.
- Have a School Liaison Officer (Inclusion & Attendance) to provide core functions
  - Communicate and advice: regularly provide updates, share examples of good practice, provide training where necessary
  - Multi-disciplinary support for families: including access to Early Help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and remove the barriers to attendance
  - Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention where other support has not been successful or engaged with
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their virtual school.

##### **2. Leigh Academies Trust (including the Attendance Welfare Officer)**

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, LAT Governance will:

- Review attendance regularly and scrutinise data, holding leaders to account
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and students to implement the policy effectively.
- AWO to support the academy with improving attendance (including weekly visits to discuss current attendance and carry out home visits where necessary)

### **3. Academy Leadership Team**

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy Leadership Team will:

- Nominate a member of the Senior Leadership Team to oversee attendance throughout the Academy and an Attendance Lead to coordinate attendance across the academy.
- Be active in their approach to promoting excellent attendance to both students and parents/carers.
- Ensure that the Academy's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught about the importance and value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Review the Attendance policy annually and ensure it is updated with Government legislation, Local Authority guidance and that the Senior Leadership Team are aware of guidance/legislation
- Ensure staff are up to date with the Attendance policy, their roles in promoting and recording attendance as well as how to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Report regularly to both Leigh Academies Trust and Kent County Council the attendance data
- Ensure clear systems are in place to record and report attendance and that they work effectively

### **4. Attendance Lead**

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy Attendance Lead will:

- Review attendance regularly
- Regularly review, alongside the attendance leads from each college and ensure letters are sent to parents/carers whose attendance has become a concern
- Coordinate daily texts to go out to parents/carers where their child is absent without notification
- Offer support via external agencies to encourage positive relationships to improve attendance.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their virtual school
- Coordinate rewards and reporting of attendance across the academy

### **5. All staff**

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, all staff will:

- Complete their registers within the first 20 minutes of every lesson
- Discuss attendance with their tutees and report any possible barriers to the relevant pastoral teams
- Promote positive attendance and take part in the whole school HERO strategy
- Actively engage in any CPD on or around attendance

## **6. Parents/Carers**

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, all parents/carers will:

- Ensure the Academy have up to date contact details for their child (including contact numbers and addresses)
- Ensure their child attends the academy during academy hours and to avoid appointments during these times
- To make contact, preferably before 9am in the event their child is unable to attend
- To communicate with the relevant pastoral team in the event there are any barriers to their child attending

### **Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an accurate attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for Wilmington Academy's attendance code list, in line with the Department for Education's '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' (Page 55).

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school no later than **8.25am** on each school day for first period at **8:30am**. The register for the first session will be taken by **8:40am** on each school day.

The register for the second session will be taken by **11:50am** on each school day.

### **Unplanned absence and illnesses**

Parents/carers must notify the Academy on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am. This can be done by email or telephone to the Academy.

Where a student exceeds more than 3 days absence within a year, medical evidence may be requested for any further future absences.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, students should attend the Academy for as much of that day as possible.

### **Authorised absences**

There may be some instances where the Academy will authorise absence such as a family bereavement. All authorised absences other than medical appointments or illness require a leave of absence request to be email

### **Fixed term suspensions**

In the event a student is issued with a fixed term suspension, this is treated as an authorised absence. These will be dealt with in line with the Academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

### **Family holidays and extended leave**

We cannot permit leave of absence for holidays. The Principal has power to grant authorised absence for exceptional circumstances. In the event there is such a request this must be put in writing to the attention of the relevant Head of College and we ask for a minimum of two weeks notice.

### **Religious observance**

The Academy recognises there may be times where students of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of the academy's holidays and weekends. We will allow authorised absences for these times. These absences will be verified by our Attendance Welfare Officer in conjunction with KCC as they hold the official record for dates of religious observance. Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notice in advance.

### **Punctuality**

Registration begins from 8.30am daily. Students who arrive after this time but before 8:45am must sign in with the Student Service Manager on the main entrance. Those who arrive after 8:45am must sign in at the main reception. Students who are recorded as late will be required to complete a detention at 3:15pm on the same day. Any unjustifiable reason for lateness will be recorded as unauthorised. It is imperative students sign in to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed. There will also be sanctions implemented on those who are late/persistently late. This can be found set out in the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

### **Attendance monitoring for students at risk/vulnerable**

All students are monitored closely including any student who is recorded as vulnerable or at risk. All concerns are recorded, reported and acted upon immediately with appropriate staff and external agencies where necessary. Safeguarding procedures and agency referral procedures are followed when required, as set out in our safeguarding policy.

### **Persistence and severe absence**

Students who have less than 90% attendance at any one time are recorded as persistent absentees. Those with less than 50% attendance at any one time are recorded as severe absentees.

### **Children Missing from Education (CME)**

KCC procedures to safeguard missing children states that the Attendance Officer/Lead should be responsible for the check and referral of any student who has not attended, been seen or contact made from parents regarding their absence of more than 20 sessions (2 weeks). A home visit will be conducted before this referral is made.

### **Interventions & Penalty Notices**

The Academy & KCC will make use of a full range of interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools/academies and Kent County Council to

decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Attendance Improvement Plans (AIP)
- Education supervision orders (issued by KCC)
- Attendance prosecution (AS1 referral completed by the Academy to KCC)
- Parenting Orders and Voluntary Orders (KCC)
- Fixed Penalty Notices (KCC)

KCC can fine any adult with the day-to-day care for the unauthorised absence of their child, from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be directly paid to KCC.

A referral to Kent County Council will be made dependent on criteria being met. This may take into account:

- 10 sessions or 5 days unauthorised absence within 100 days (this can include being late after 9am)
- One-off instances such as unauthorised holiday (10 sessions or 5 days)
- Where an fixed term suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, KCC can decide whether to prosecute a parent or withdraw the notice.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

- Regular communication with staff, students and parents/carers
- MCAS so parents can access their child's attendance
- Texts sent out for students who are absent without reason
- Letters in the event a students attendance falls below expectations
- HERO reward strategy
- Wimington Wheels & home visits where necessary
- Utilise external agencies where necessary
- Digital displays for tutor group attendance
- Attendance Improvement Plans
- Certificates and rewards for students with positive attendance
- We have a limited number of uniform items which have been loaned is this is a barrier to attendance



**Appendices:**

1. Flow chart for attendance
2. Attendance Codes list
3. Letter 1 template
4. Letter 2 template
5. Letter 3 template
6. PN Warning Letter
7. Refusal letter
8. Punctuality letter