

St Aidan's Church of England Academy

Attendance Policy

Adopted by Governors:	June 2009
Review Date:	April 2018
To be reviewed:	April 2021

St Aidan's Church of England Academy

Preface to all policies and procedures.

St Aidan's Church of England Academy is a Christian learning environment at the heart of its community. We promote care, respect and responsibility and expect high standards in all aspects of Academy life.

As a Church of England Academy we aim to build a community clearly based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution, protect the weak and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

Policy Principles

Attendance is central to achievement. Ensuring good attendance and punctuality at St Aidan's Church of England Academy is a fundamental part of every member of staff's role. Vigilance and a swift response to absence is key. All unexplained absence should be queried on the first day.

Positive steps towards supporting attendance

- An attendance register should be taken every lesson so that checks can be made.
- Attendance certificates awarded for 100% attendance will be given on appropriate occasions.
- Attendance records should be kept in a student's profile and targets set for improvement where appropriate.
- Percentage attendances for each tutor group should be kept weekly and the winner announced in the bulletin, assembly and displayed prominently in school.
- The tutor group with the best overall attendance for each half-term will be awarded a certificate.
- Random checks on a year group should be made to prevent truanting after registration.
- Arrangements can be made with parents of students who have a tendency to truant, to telephone school before 10.00 am if an absence is legitimate. We will contact them if the student is absent and parents have not given a reason. This also supports students who are being encouraged to truant as they can use the Academy finding out as their excuse for refusing to truant with peers.

Identifying Problems

Each tutor should identify those students causing concern regarding attendance and the House Manager should be informed.

Some key questions

- Is the student absent for long periods of time?
- Is the pattern weekly on the same day(s)?
- Is another student absent at the same time(s)?
- Is the student unhappy in the class group?
- Is there any bullying (including name calling and verbal bullying)?
- How do the student's friends perceive the problem?
- Is the student constantly going to the office feeling ill in an attempt to be sent home?

Suggestions for improving and monitoring attendance

A list should be compiled of students whose attendance causes concern and tutors should be asked to monitor these students in the following ways:

- a) after three days' absence and no information from home, a letter should be sent to ask the parents the reasons for absence,
- b) a telephone call or a letter to be sent home via the office to inform the parents that we are monitoring their child's attendance and asking for their co-operation. If there is no reply or the reply is unsatisfactory a referral form should be completed by tutors immediately and given to the House Manager to pass on to EWO. The onus is on the tutor to let the House Manager know.
- c) if there is a recurrence of poor attendance or no improvement over the two weeks following the letter, the E.W.O. be asked to call and discuss the matter with parents and report back to the personal mentor. The House Manager will raise the problem with the E.W.O once they have been notified. A referral form will need to be completed to give the EWO key details.
- d) if there is a deterioration or no immediate improvement, the parents and child should be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the situation with the E.W.O., tutor and House Manager responsible for that student.
- e) if the parents maintain the child is frequently too ill to attend, the school should request a medical examination and should act on its recommendation.
- f) if there appears to be a problem that suggests the educational psychologist should be consulted or involved then the House Manager should make contact and pursue that avenue.
- g) the House Manager should be consulted and involved if there appears to be a problem requiring classroom support for a student.
- h) the local authority can be asked to be involved if there is a family problem which appears to be best referred in this way. We can also discuss cases with them without a formal referral.
- i) If all these avenues have been explored and there is no improvement in the student's attendance the parents and child will be referred to the E.W.O.

The intention of the steps outlined above is to assist parents and students in achieving an improvement in the student's attendance record.

It should be possible to solve most of the problems by stage (d) and only a few students should reach stage (i) if the appropriate steps are taken early enough. Most parents are glad of our concern and anxious for our help in sorting out the problem.

Why do students stay off school?

- Some parents are lonely and rely on their children for support. Girls can be used to look after younger members of the family and this needs careful monitoring and handling but is certainly not acceptable on a regular basis.
- Some families have a casual approach to school and do not perceive it as a route to improved opportunities for their children. We have to change this view.
- Some students go through a patch of friendship problems and this starts a pattern which then becomes difficult to break unless it is dealt with early enough.
- Some students suffer from bullying - not necessarily physical - which makes them very unhappy and school 'phobic'.
- Sometimes children who stay away are afraid of what will happen at home if they are not there - e.g. mum may leave or be assaulted and occasionally parents keep children at home as protection from their partners.

Why should we be concerned?

The messages that are sent out by our insistence on good and regular attendance are very important. We could ignore the troublesome students absence, but if we do, we create more problems when they return by their disaffection and inability to cope with the work. High standards cannot be achieved by students who are consistently absent and their influence on a class group can be subtly undermining.

Early identification of a problem is vital and the persistence of the tutor, without antagonism, is important. Most parents will be pleased to co-operate.

The E.W.O. will visit parents but we should try and make contact initially. Where the parent is experiencing difficulty in persuading a student to come into school the E.W.O. will assist.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.

