

# **Cambridge Park Academy**

## **Attendance policy**

**This policy was approved by the Local Governing Body on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

**Chair of Governors**

**Adopted on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2029**

**This policy will be reviewed at least annually on or before 29.6.27 or sooner as the governing body considers necessary in response to the ongoing review of attendance data**

## **1 Aim of this policy**

To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at Cambridge Park Academy

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Academy's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled Working together to improve Academy attendance (2024), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

## **2 Key principles**

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the Academy to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend Academy. The Academy will work with pupils, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or pupils have should be discussed with class teacher and/or attendance team. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and pupils should contact [attendance@cambridgepark.het.academy](mailto:attendance@cambridgepark.het.academy)

## **3 Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 The Academy**

The Academy will:

- develop and maintain a whole Academy culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance. To promote good attendance, we reward individual pupils and classes during weekly assemblies. Certificates are awarded from the Trust for high performing classes.
- work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate

- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the Academy's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations<sup>1</sup> and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other Academics in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all pupils can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that the trust board and Academy's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our Child Protection policy)
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Academy to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education Summary table of responsibilities for Academy attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)

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<sup>1</sup> Academy Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

[publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

### **3.2 Parents and carers**

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the Academy on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the Academy (see section 6.3 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the Academy informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.3 below)
- inform the Academy in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: Summary table of responsibilities for Academy attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)).

### **3.3 Pupils**

We expect pupils to:

- attend the Academy regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the Academy late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

### **3.4 Senior Attendance Champion**

The Senior Attendance Champion ("SAC") at the Academy is Mr Darren Gardiner Assistant Principal.

The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Academy and will:

- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that these are followed by all staff
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the Academy
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and pupils
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

### **3.5 The board of trustees/local governing body**

The board of trustees/local governing will:

- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of Academy attendance and promote it across the trust and Academy's ethos and policies
- ensure the Academy's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help Academy leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ensure Academy staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- ensure the Central Team share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its Academics
- ensure the Central Team hold regular attendance review meetings with the Academy
- require the Academy/Central Team to report to the trustees on the Academy's attendance at regular intervals
- have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the Trust and act as a central point for Academics with attendance queries.

## **4 Registration**

- 4.1** The Academy maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each pupil's attendance at the start of the Academy day and again in the afternoon.

<b>Registration session</b>	<b>Start time</b>	<b>End time</b>
Morning	9.00 a.m.	9.30 a.m.
Afternoon	13.00 p.m.	13.30 p.m.

- 4.2** Pupils who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where pupils arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.
- 4.3** The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education’s guidance on attendance - DfE Attendance Guidance.
- 4.4** Where a pupil attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

## **5 Late arrival**

- 5.1** If a pupil arrives at the Academy after the relevant registration period has ended, but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the Academy office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness to enable the Academy to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- 5.2** Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with behaviour policy.

## **6 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation**

- 6.1** **Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the Academy has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the Academy can authorise absence.
- 6.2** **Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the Academy is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

### **6.3 Reporting absence from the Academy**

- 6.3.1** Where a pupil is to be absent from the Academy without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the Academy by telephone/dojo/attendance email; ([attendance@cambridgepark.het.academy](mailto:attendance@cambridgepark.het.academy)) on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the Academy know when they expect the pupils to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the Academy on each day of absence.

6.3.2 On the day of return to the Academy, parents must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence. This is recorded on CPOM's .

6.3.3 In cases where the Academy needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parents/cares may be asked to provide the Academy with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor to support an absence for illness. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

## **6.4 Appointments**

6.4.1 Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupils should take place outside of Academy hours where this is reasonably possible.

6.4.2 Where an appointment must take place during Academy time, the pupils should attend the Academy for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to the class teacher and attendance team.

## **6.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)**

The Academy will grant permission for a pupil to be absent from Academy in the circumstances described in paragraph 37 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:

- taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment
- study leave for public examinations
- temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- other exceptional circumstances.

6.5.2 Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.

6.5.3 To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Head Teacher and, wherever possible, at least 4 Academy weeks ahead of the planned leave.

6.5.4 Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Head Teacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:

- will be confirmed in writing
- is solely at the Head Teacher discretion and

- is final.
- 6.5.5 Where permission is granted, the Head Teacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- 6.5.6 If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the Academy, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

## **6.6 Religious observance**

6.6.1 We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during Academy time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupils belong.

the absence from the Academy will be authorised.

6.6.2 We ask that parents/carers notify the Academy in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

## **6.7 Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

6.7.1 There may be circumstances in which pupils cannot attend Academy due to Covid-19. The Academy will adhere to any current guidance issued by the Department for Education relating to the recording of attendance in relation to Covid-19.

6.7.2 If a pupil tests positive for coronavirus, their absence will be recorded as illness.

## **7 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality**

7.1 The Academy will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or groups of pupils who need it most. In doing so, the Academy, led by the SAC, will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders
- identify pupils who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends

- benchmark Academy attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of Academy strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of pupils who the Academy and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable

**7.2** Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found here in annex 2

**7.3** Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent truancy or lateness

we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

**7.4** In cases where the Academy has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the pupil, a home welfare check may be carried out.

**7.5** Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour policy.

**7.6** Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.

**7.7** Where out of Academy barriers to attendance are identified, the Academy will signpost and support access to any additional services.

**7.8** Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory Academy age is regularly attending the Academy and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days, £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

**7.9** When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- the National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 176 – 202 of the DfE Attendance Guidance; and
- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

**7.10** In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory Academy age fails to attend Academy regularly.

**Annex 1**

**Application for exceptional leave of absence during term time**

*Please note due to government legislation only one application per academic year can be considered.*

Name of child (ren):  
(Please use one form per family)

Class Group:

Address:

Leave of absence request from:

To:

Number of days absent from school:

Expected date of return to school:

Current attendance percentage at time of request:

- Above the National Average
- On the National Average
- Below the National Average
- Classified as Persistent Absence
- Classified as Severe Absence

Has the pupil had a previous exceptional leave of absence within the current academic year?

Which is? (highlighted statement)  
Reason for term time leave request:

.....  
Details of travel arrangements:(*if traveling abroad please include dates of leaving and returning to the country.*)

Name:

Relationship to the child:

Contact number:

Email address

Signed:

Date:

**For School use only**

Parent/carer attended school **phone consultation** to discuss request:

Have travel details been obtained if travel is abroad:

Has governmental foreign travel guidance been shared if travel is abroad., website. [Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK](#) N/A

Meeting discussion information:

Has the request for term time leave been authorised:

Please state reason for decision:

.....

.....

.....

Date when parent/carer was provided with decision in writing:

**Staff member print name:**

**Staff member signature:**

**Date:**

.....

**Exceptional leave of absence guidance for parents and carers:**

**Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education through regular attendance at school or otherwise (e.g. elective home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996). If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school/academy they are registered at, the parent/carer will be guilty of an offence (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996).**

All applications must be made in writing by parent/carer in advance of leave taking place. and must be received in advance of the absence occurring to allow for administering the request. The Headteacher will **not authorise** any leave of absence request during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances which have been agreed by the Headteacher. In the event of there being exceptional circumstances, parents/carers will be expected to provide written evidence to support this alongside requesting full details of outward and return travel e.g. flight tickets/other supporting documentation.

The outcome of all applications for exceptional leave of absence during term time will be provided in writing to parents and carers.

All unauthorised leave of absence that amounts to 10 missed sessions within a 10-week rolling period, (5 school days) or more, will be subject to the issuance of a penalty notice by the Local Authority. The penalty notice is £160 per parent, per child. The penalty notice is payable within 28 days, with a reduction to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Example penalty notice information below:

- *A two-parent family with 4 children will be fined £1280 in the first instance payable within 28 days, with a reduction to £640 if paid within 21 days.*
- *A one parent family with 2 children will be fined £320 in the first instance, payable within 28 days, with a reduction to £160 if paid within 21 days.*
- *A two-parent family with 3 children will be fined £960 in the first instance, payable within 28 days, with a reduction to £480 if paid within 21 days.*
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Penalty notice fines must be paid in full to the Local Authority within 28 days (21 days for the reduced rate) or parents face the risk of prosecution.

**Please note:** if a second penalty notice is issued within a 3-year rolling period, the rate is a flat rate of £160 per parent per child payable within 28 days. There is no option to pay at the reduced rate.

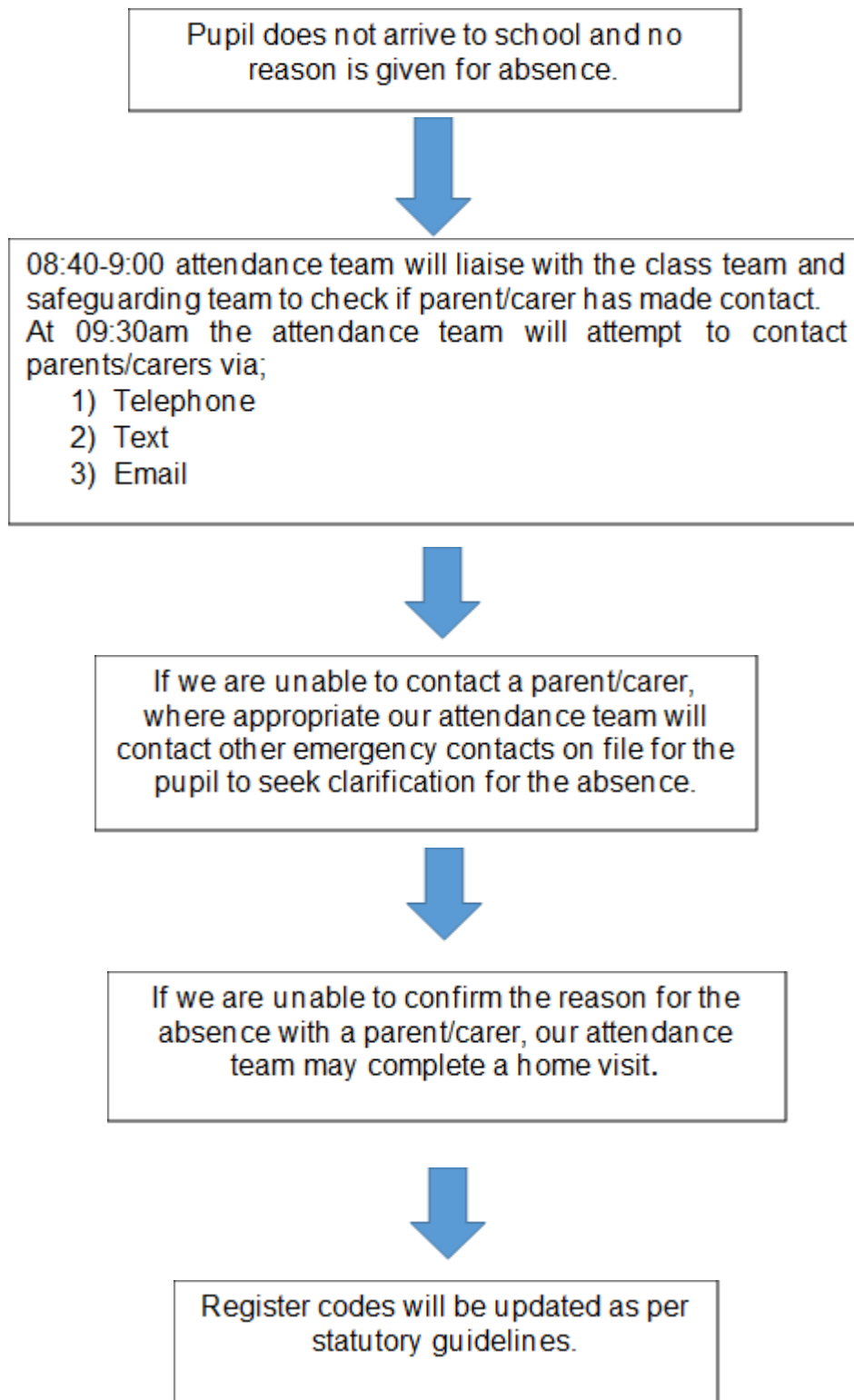
**Further note:** if there is a third offence within the above mentioned 3-year rolling period, parents may face prosecution in a court of law.

In accordance with Department for Education guidance – Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024, please note:

**Should a child be absent for 20 or more school days, they will be reported to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education and will be removed from the school roll. Parents/carers will be required to apply for a new school place through the Local Authority. Your child is not guaranteed to be given a place at the same**

**Annex 2.** Procedures for Managing Unexplained Absences.

**Procedure for Managing Unexplained Absences**



**Where appropriate incidences of unexplained absences will be shared with other agencies as appropriate.**

## Penalty Notice Fines for School attendance are changing



With the introduction of a new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

### First offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance, the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for term time leave of five or more consecutive days.

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a ten-week period.

### Second offence

(within 3 years of the issue of first penalty notice)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance, the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days

### Third offence and any further offences

(within 3 years of the issue of first penalty notice)

The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Magistrates fines can be up to **£2500** per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS.