

## **Attendance Policy 2019**

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All Members of the Board of Directors are also Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Director' used in this Policy also means Trustee. This Policy applies to all pupils in schools within the Link Academy Trust.

All schools within the Link Academy Trust are committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. As a Multi Academy Trust we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible in line with procedures agreed by the Governors.

It is the policy of our Trust to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. We will actively promote, encourage and reward 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

### **Objectives**

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance through the School's rewards system
- to ensure a consistent approach in line with all schools within the Trust

### **Statutory Duty of Schools and Parents**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that pupils arrive at School on time, properly attired, and in a condition to learn. All schools will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

### **The Educational Welfare Service and School Attendance**

The EWS is a part of the Devon Local Authority. Its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

***What happens if your child does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)?***

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly and, as a parent/carer, this is your responsibility. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring you to pay a fine of up to £60 per parent/carer, per child (if paid within 21 days) or £120 (if paid with 28 days) if their attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances you may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where you could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500.

You will be given every opportunity to improve your child's attendance and you will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

### **Statutory Attendance**

There is a legal requirement to have an AM and a PM registration.

**AM:** Pupils will be registered at the beginning of each morning (9.00am) by the teacher. Registration closes at 9.15am; any arrivals between 9.00am and 9.15am will be classified as LATE (Code L).

Arrival after 9.15am is recorded as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE (Code U).

**PM:** Registration takes place at the beginning of the afternoon session by the class teacher.

**X:** we shall be using this code for all children below statutory school age who are absent for any reason, including part time education.

All registration will be recorded on the SIMS system at the end of each week by the administrator.

Class registers must be taken at the beginning of all sessions by the teacher. Accurate registration is very important and registration details can be used as evidence where parents/carers are prosecuted for school attendance offences. The attendance register will be kept for three years by all schools.

### **Request for absence during Term Time**

All requests must be made using the S2 form, available from the office, at the earliest convenience before the request for absence. The schools within the Trust do not encourage any absence during term time and the Executive/Academy Heads **may no longer authorise absences unless for exceptional circumstances**. In this situation the Executive/Academy Head will liaise with the CEO.

- No absence will be authorised in the first two weeks of any term or during May when SATs for Years 2 and 6 take place

If a parent/carer is refused an absence request and the pupil is still taken out of a school by the parent/carer, the School / Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

### **Reporting Absences**

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the School of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first and each day of absence. The School will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent pupil will be contacted by the Administrator. Parents/Carers will be asked to ensure that, should a safeguarding concern arise, one of the alternative emergency contacts they have registered with the school, will be able to gain access to their property to check all is in order.

On the second day of absence, if the School has a Safeguarding concern, they should request to speak to the child, offer to send work home and if still concerned, arrange a

possible home visit. If the School still has serious safeguarding concerns, then a telephone call to the Police should be made if necessary and/or make contact with any other contacts listed on the pupil's record.

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the school by one of the following methods:

- By phone to the Administrator.
- Personal contact with Administrator at school, where a note will be passed to the teacher.

In the case of long term illness the school should be notified.

If it is known that the pupil will be absent for more than 2 weeks, the EWO should be notified. Where over the course of an academic year, a pupil misses 16 sessions due to illness, the School will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

### **Truancy**

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be informed by the Administrator if their child has been identified as truanting from the school. Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

### **Punctuality**

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving on time. Persistent cases will be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

### **Staff guidance and procedures.**

#### **Reporting to Parents**

*Annual Report to parents/carers includes summative information on attendance as well as comment on punctuality*

#### **Distribution of Data**

*The Administrator will produce for Executive/Academy Head:*

- a) printout of all attendances for previous week*
- b) Reports on persistent lateness to school in the mornings (6 or more).*
- c) all pupils below 95% attendance*
- d) % attendance figures for all pupils half termly.*

*The Executive/Academy Head will report attendance data to the Governors via the Academy Trust Improvement Lead (ATIL) termly and against targets annually.*

#### **User Codes and reconciliation of registers**

- *If a pupil is absent, use Code N, unless there is already a code which has been entered. (Must be altered once reason for absence established)*
- *If a pupil is late during registration use Code L.*
- *Only the national attendance codes issued can be used.*

## **Absence from School**

### **Authorisation of absences from school:**

- Parent/carer provides written note signed by them, on pupil's return, unless parent/carer has contacted the school by another acceptable means. (see above)
- Teacher to record on registration system using appropriate code.
- Teacher to hand in absence notes/records at end of every week to the Administrator. These will then be archived for 3 years.

### **Follow up procedures for unauthorised absence or persistent absence (including illness) from School:** See attached flow chart 'Encouraging Good Attendance'

### **Follow up procedures for lateness to school in the morning:**

Admin contacts home or sends standard letter if pupil regularly arrives late at school.

Admin will alert Executive/Academy Head to any pupil who has 6 or more lates in any half term. Executive/Academy Head will contact parents.

Where there is no improvement if lateness continues to persist the Executive/Academy Head will refer the pupil to EWO who may consider instigating legal procedures.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Role of Local Board:** Understands and monitors the implementation of the policy, receives a termly report via Executive/Academy Heads. The Local Boards report to the Standards & Curriculum Committee.

**Executive/Academy Heads:** Monitor overall Academy attendance and update Local Board.

**Administrator:** Administration of attendance and punctuality data within the framework of this policy, first day contacts.

### **Teachers:**

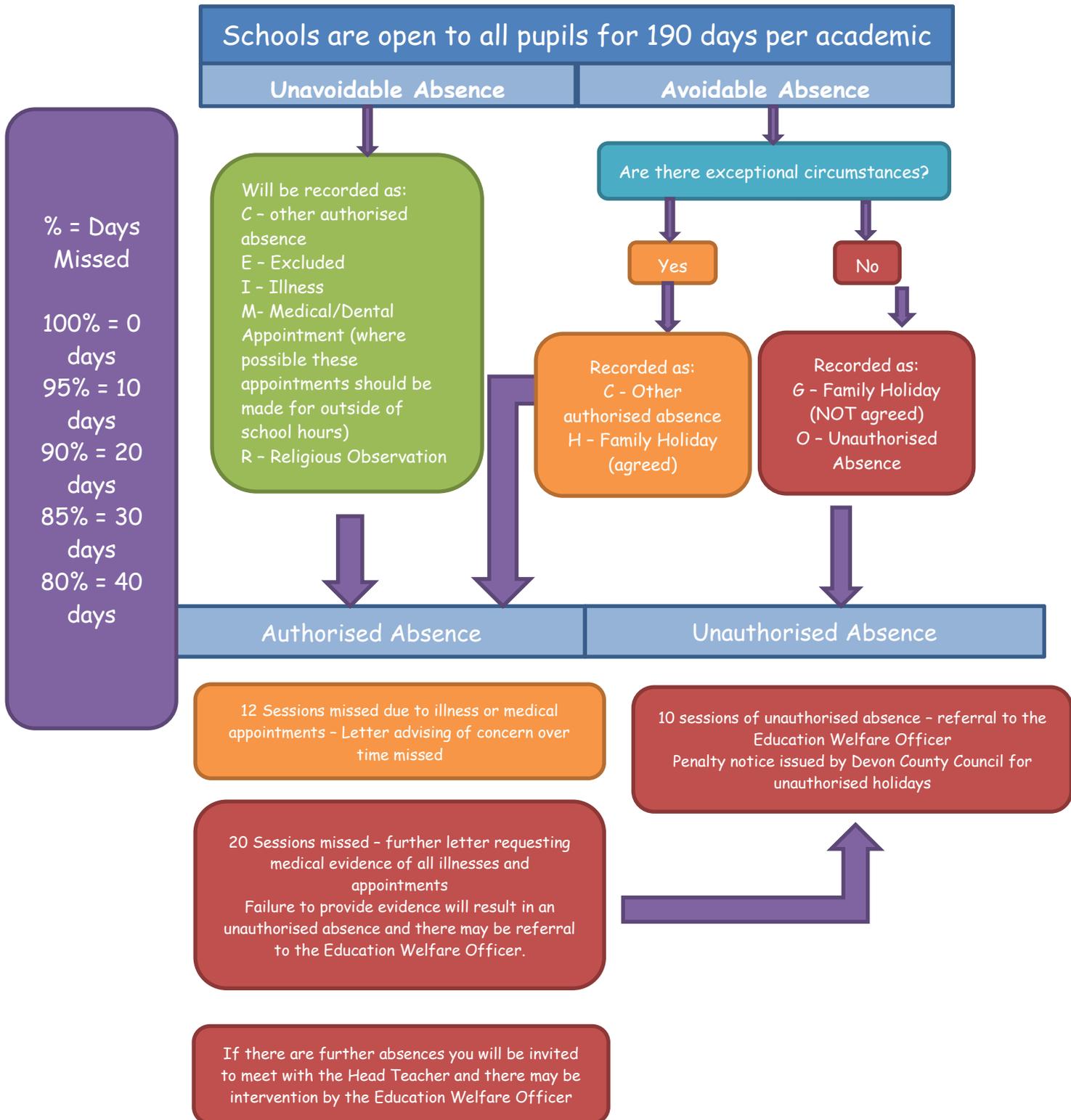
Keep an accurate register and follow up of absences and lateness within the systems and procedures of this policy.

**Education Welfare Officer:** Implementation of LA procedures in enforcing attendance and assisting year teams with advising pupils and parents of the legal consequences of failing to meet these obligations. The EWO is the attendance enforcement arm of the LA. The EWO for our schools will be fully informed of all absences giving cause for concern and will have full access to the electronic registration system

This Policy is reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee on an annual cycle.

**Approved by the Board of Directors: 7 October 2019**

# THE LINK ACADEMY TRUST School Absence



## ***COPY AND PASTE TO SCHOOL HEADED PAPER***

Insert Name & Address of Parent/Carer

Insert Date

Dear <<Name Name>>

### **Persistent Authorised Absence**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

I am writing to inform you our records show that your child has had 12 or more authorised absences (equivalent to 6 days), which is above the acceptable level allowed for our school.

I do appreciate that these absences are mainly due to illness or other authorised circumstances, e.g. Medical Appointments, but I would like to remind you that low attendance could be detrimental to your child's educational progress and attainment.

I must make you aware at this stage that if your child's attendance does not improve and your child's absence reaches 20 or more authorised sessions (10 days), then a further letter requesting medical evidence of all illnesses and appointments will be issued and failure to provide this will result in an unauthorised absence and there may be a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

I have attached a copy of your child's attendance record so that you can see the seriousness of the situation and carefully consider the reasons for it before the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Insert Name

**Executive/Academy Head**

## ***COPY AND PASTE TO SCHOOL HEADED PAPER***

Insert Name & Address of Parent/Carer

Insert Date

Dear <<Name Name>>

### **Persistent Authorised Absence - Medical Evidence Required**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

Any absence for sickness is authorised purely at the discretion of the school. Currently the school are authorising your children's absence with a medical coding. Your child has now had in excess of 20 missed sessions due to sickness. Therefore, in line with the Link Academy Trusts Attendance policy, we are now requesting you provide medical evidence in order to authorise any future absences.

If we do not receive this then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer

I would like to meet with you to discuss our concerns over this position. The meeting will be on xxxxx at xxxxxxxxx school. Please bring medial evidence with you to the meeting if you have it.

***Please ensure that all future absences are covered by medical evidence (this can be a GP's note, GP's appointment slip or copy of a prescription).***

Yours sincerely

Insert Name

**Executive/Academy Head**

## ***COPY AND PASTE TO SCHOOL HEADED PAPER***

Insert Name & Address of Parent/Carer

Insert Date

Dear <<Name Name>>

### **Unauthorised Absence**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

As a result of continuing low attendance and failure to provide medical evidence, your child is now considered to fall into the category of a Persistent Absentee as designated by the criteria laid down by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

OR

Following your request for absence from school for your child/children being refused and that you chose to still take your child out of school unauthorised, this had resulted in your child having 10 or more unauthorised absences (equivalent to 5 days).

This serious matter has now had to be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. You will be expected to attend a meeting with myself and the EWO to plan for significant and immediate improvement.

The meeting will take place on xxxxxxx, at xxxxxxx school.

Please confirm your attendance at this meeting by contacting the school on <<**School Contact Details**>> on receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Insert Name

**Executive/Academy Head**

## ***COPY AND PASTE TO SCHOOL HEADED PAPER***

Insert Name & Address of Parent/Carer

Insert Date

Dear <<Name Name>>

### **Persistent Lateness to school.**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

Our records show that your child's punctuality falls below the acceptable level allowed for our school. You will be aware that regular and punctual attendance at school is vital so that pupils are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

I have attached a copy of your child's attendance record for you information, with 'L' recording a late attendance.

I hope that by drawing your child's persistent lateness to your attention, you will be able to ensure they are in school in time for registration. This will help their learning. If there is a particular reason for the lateness, please call me so the school can help to resolve this. The 1996 education Act, states that the required attendance for children to attend school is 'every day school is open'.

If we do not see improvement over the next 3-4 school weeks, we will have no alternative but to involve the Education Welfare Officer.

If you would like to meet with me to discuss this further, please make an appointment with the office.

Yours sincerely

Insert name

**Executive/Academy Head**