



Wise Academy Attendance Policy

DATE AGREED	October 2014
DATE TO BE REVIEWED	July 2015
SIGNED	

INTRODUCTION

Parents of compulsory school age (five to sixteen) children have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise than at a school (this includes home education). If a child is registered at school, parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. WISE Academies' ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important, that they are missed when they are absent or late. Appropriate action will be taken when necessary in order to promote the aims of the policy.

Aims

- To maximise attendance of all children.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support of the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

- **Local Governing Bodies (LGB)**
 - To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- **Headteacher**
 - To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
 - As part of their monitoring of attendance, know how many children are absent each day, including any children who are absent who are Looked After or subject to Child Protection, Child in Need or Team Around the Child procedures.
 - To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.

- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
 - To provide LGB with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
 - To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
 - To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- **Class Teacher**
 - To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
 - To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by Office Staff.
 - To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.
- **Office Staff**
 - To accurately prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of Integris Management Information System for recording pupil attendance.
 - To record the reasons for absence given to them using the appropriate code.
 - To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
 - To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason if they have not been contacted by a parent to provide a reason for absence.
 - To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
 - To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
 - To flag up to Headteacher any child who is absent who is subject to a child protection or team around the child procedures or any other child who the Headteacher has concerns about. The Headteacher will identify the children who they wish the office to identify.
- **Education Welfare Officer**
 - To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
 - To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.
- **Parents / Carers**
 - Ensure regular and punctual school attendance.
 - To inform the school by 9.00am if their child is sick or away from school for

any reason. This is especially important as the school is legally required to report reasons for absence. The school will ring home if no notification has been received and may contact the Academy's attendance officer or social care if there are concerns around a child's whereabouts.

- To inform the school in advance and show the school the appointment card/letter and if necessary speak to the Head Teacher, if there is an unavoidable medical appointment that a child has to attend.
- Where a child has to be collected during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by arrangement with the office staff. Children **cannot** be allowed to meet parents / carers off school property and they must be picked up by an adult.

CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN:

Where school has concerns about a child's attendance, the will notify Children's services and report the concern to the identified person for the child immediately. If the family cannot be contacted that day a home visit will be made by the attendance officer at the earliest opportunity.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN:

Where school has concerns about a child's attendance, the will notify the relevant team and report the concern to the identified person for the child immediately.

ADMINISTRATION

- The School uses the Integris Management Information System to store and monitor it's legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are returned to the School Office after the closure of the registration period.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

ABSENCE

Illness

- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence.
- Where Office Staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will, wherever possible, contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher should be informed.

- If parents / carers do not inform the Academy of their child's reason for absence, this matter should be dealt with by informing the parent of the school policy via letter. If the parent / carer still does not follow the policy a meeting should be arranged with the Headteacher.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.
- Where absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment cannot be avoided, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments and also bring their child into school either before or after the appointment so that full sessions are not missed.

Holidays During Term Time

From 1st September 2013 the DfE amended the regulations surrounding holidays in term time. The DfE has removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. These new amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Exceptional circumstances may include events such as the wedding of an immediate family member such as a parent / carer or if a parent / carer is in the armed forces and is home on leave. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

Low cost travel or arrangements made by a family member or friends are NOT deemed to be exceptional circumstances. Headteachers will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if any leave is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the Academy's Local Governing Body.

If a parent / carer deems that they have circumstances that can be deemed exceptional, they should make a request in writing to the Headteacher. (See Appendix 1). The Headteacher will then reply in writing to inform whether the request has been granted. No holiday should be booked until a response has been received

WISE Academies will monitor all absences during term time and challenge those parents that do not adhere to the new legislation. Any unauthorised absence will be dealt with through non-attendance procedures.

Other Absence

Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or un-authorise the absence

LATENESS

- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed, will be considered as late.

- Pupils arriving late must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school’s strategy to improve punctuality where targets are set when trigger levels are reached. Any child being late for sessions on more than 5 occasions will trigger action with targets being set over a four-week period for improvement.

REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS

The will raise the awareness of the implications of poor school attendance through:

- Newsletters
- Parents Evenings
- Induction Meetings
- Home-school agreements
- Rewarding good attendance and punctuality
- Acknowledging improved attendance
- Periodically reminding parents of the Academy's procedures for notification of absences

The Academy will actively pursue “truancy” whether it is intentional on the part of the child or is condoned by parents [ie unauthorised absence]. If the Academy has evidence of truancy, the Headteacher will confirm the absence as “unauthorised” to the parents in writing.

The procedure outlined below is a staged response to irregular school attendance and poor punctuality. The Academy works hard to regularly monitor attendance and punctuality. It is hoped that problems about attendance can be resolved by Stage 2.

Concerns raised about a child’s absence are discussed. Information is shared openly and reasons for absence are discussed. The DFE also indicate to school those children who they consider are “at risk” from becoming persistent absentees, following the termly Census. Where this is the case school will inform parents.

All absences both authorised, unauthorised absence and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of each term and the end of the academic year within their child’s report.

In order to give parents/carers a benchmark to their child’s attendance against national indicators the following grades will be used :

100%	Excellent
99.9% - 98%	Very Good

97.9% - 96%	Good
95.9% - 95%	Satisfactory
Under 95%	Requires Improvement

REWARDS

- Children who achieve 100% attendance at the end of the year will be acknowledged and rewarded.
- Good and improved attendance is rewarded in a tangible way for classes and individuals for example through positive comments, certificates and stickers.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Attendance data will be collected on a weekly basis for each class and vulnerable groups to establish patterns of irregular attendance. WISE Academies will monitor attendance of each academy on a weekly basis. Academy level monitoring will include: children with incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence; periods of unauthorised ; and all children with attendance below 85%. This data will be discussed with the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis.
- The Headteacher and Attendance Officer will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors.

PROCEDURES THE SCHOOL WILL USE TO FOLLOW UP IRREGULAR/NON ATTENDANCE

WISE Academies rigorously monitor attendance. Any child who is below 95% has their attendance monitored each week until the end of the school year. Any child whose attendance is 95% or below at the end of a school year, will be monitored from the outset of a new school year.

Any child highlighted with attendance of below 95% will automatically be discussed by the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer on a weekly basis. Following this discussion the following procedures will be followed. The Headteacher will know of any mitigating circumstances, such as serious medical conditions, that have lead to low attendance and will be mindful of this situation when flagging children to commence non-attendance procedures.

At any time in the school year, where there are concerns around a child's attendance, a Parenting Contract may be drawn up to address attendance issues (See Appendix 2).

Any pupil with patterns of irregular attendance i.e. incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; periods of extended absence; periods of un-authorised absence, etc., will begin formal Non-Attendance proceedings as detailed below. At any point during this procedure a

parent / carer may be notified that the academy will no longer authorise a child's absence without legitimate medical proof which validates the reason for absence provided.

Non-Attendance Procedures

- Stage 1 – Any pupil whose attendance falls below 95% may be sent a concern letter from the academy, which may come from the attendance officer acting on behalf of the academy. A copy of this letter should be held by the academy. The child will be set a target for improvement over a four week period. If the child's attendance does not improve and the child does not meet the target, the Headteacher, supported by the attendance officer should decide whether to continue to monitor the child under stage 1 procedures or whether it is necessary to progress the child to Stage 2 procedures.
- Stage 2 – The Headteacher, the non-attendance panel of the LGB and an attendance officer will meet with the parents and child to complete a parenting contract and set targets for improvements in attendance over an allocated time period. If attendance fails to improve move to stage 3.
- Stage 3 – Interview with Senior Attendance Officer and pupil/parent. A further improvement target will be set. If attendance fails to improve this will trigger a meeting between the senior attendance officer and the senior enforcement officer to discuss the case and handover for sanctioning resulting in moving to stage 4.

At any stage an improvement in the pupils attendance will result in the pupil moving back through the stages and the school attendance manager monitoring the attendance in school.

Stage 4 and 5 involve the authority enforcement team and are no longer in the hands of the school.

- Stage 4 – A meeting will take place between the Senior Enforcement Officer and the parent/carer. This could result in a penalty notice, a voluntary parenting order, or move to court (Stage 5).
- Stage 5 – Court attended by Senior Enforcement Officer and parent/carer. This could result in a fine, imprisonment or conditional discharge.

This policy will be reviewed from time to time following guidance or regulations set from DfE or whenever WISE Academies determines that changes need to be made.

Fixed Penalty Notices

WISE Academies has received notification from Sunderland Local Authority that Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) will be used to enforce non-attendance at school from 01/09/2014. Local Authorities are granted the power to issue FPN under the Education Act 1996, section 444. Following agreement with key staff, wise academies have endorsed this decision and will be following this guidance.

When a FPN will be used.

- 1) A FPN warning letter may be issued if a child has 20 or more unauthorised absences in a 10 week period.
- 2) A FPN may be issued to a parent of their child has further unauthorised absences during the 15 days following the receipt of a FPN warning letter.
- 3) A FPN may be issued if a pupil has unauthorised absence resulting from an unauthorised holiday in term time.
- 4) A FPN requires payment of £60 in 21 days or £120 within 28 days, and will result in a prosecution for unauthorised absence if unpaid.

See Appendix 3 and 4 for further information.

Appendix 1 REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Name of Student

Class:

First school day of absence: (day)(month)(year)

Last school day of absence: (day) (month) (year)

Number of days requested:

Reason for absence.....

Name:

Relationship to child:

Signed: Date:

Please note:

- Holiday during term time cannot be authorised due to new DFE legislation. From 1.9.13, should you take your child on holiday it will be recorded as an **unauthorised** absence.
 - **The current legislations state that leave of absence may only be granted in special circumstances. Please note, holidays cannot be considered special circumstances.**
 - If your child is absent without permission you are likely to be visited by the Attendance Officer (Regulation 12 of the Education Regulations 1991).
 - If attendance drops below the government target of 96% it will trigger attendance procedures.
 - If your child is absent from school for 10 days (or 20 half days) over a ten week period, and the absence is unauthorised, the Local Authority can impose a fixed penalty fine of **£60**. This penalty may rise to **£120** and ultimately a Court Summons if the Penalty remains unpaid.
-

For office use

Attendance percentage so far this academic year:

Academy attendance target – 96%

The request for leave of absence has not been granted

The request for leave of absence has been granted

Number of days that have been granted:

Attendance is currently below our school target and will be monitored

Signed:(Head Teacher)

Date:

Appendix 2

PARENTING CONTRACT

Personal Details

Pupil's Name:

Carer's Name:

Contact details

Head Teacher's name:

Contact details:

Aim of Parenting Contract

It has been acknowledged by all parties above that 's school attendance is of concern. It was only% betweenand It is hoped that the contract will ensure that 's attendance at Academy will improve and that this improvement will also be sustained.

A meeting was held on

All agreed to work together to help to attend school more regularly.

The following was discussed:

The following was agreed

School's Agreement

- Contact parent on first day of the child's absence, where notification has not been provided by parent.
- will be available as named persons to be contacted if parent would like to discuss anything.
- Respond to any problems reported that impact on 's attendance and education.
- Make any referrals that are appropriate to support an improved level of attendance.
- If attendance and punctuality do not continue to improve to look at legal monitoring.

Parent's Agreement

- To continue to notify school immediately upon any changes to any contact details.
- To continue to contact school on the first day of absence, providing a full reason for the absence and giving an estimated date of return.
- To inform school of any issue(s) that impacts on their child's attendance and education.
- To be available for appointments with school and/or EWO/PSA when necessary, or if not available, to contact the relevant person to re-arrange to a more suitable time.
- To work with agencies to improve attendance.

Important Dates

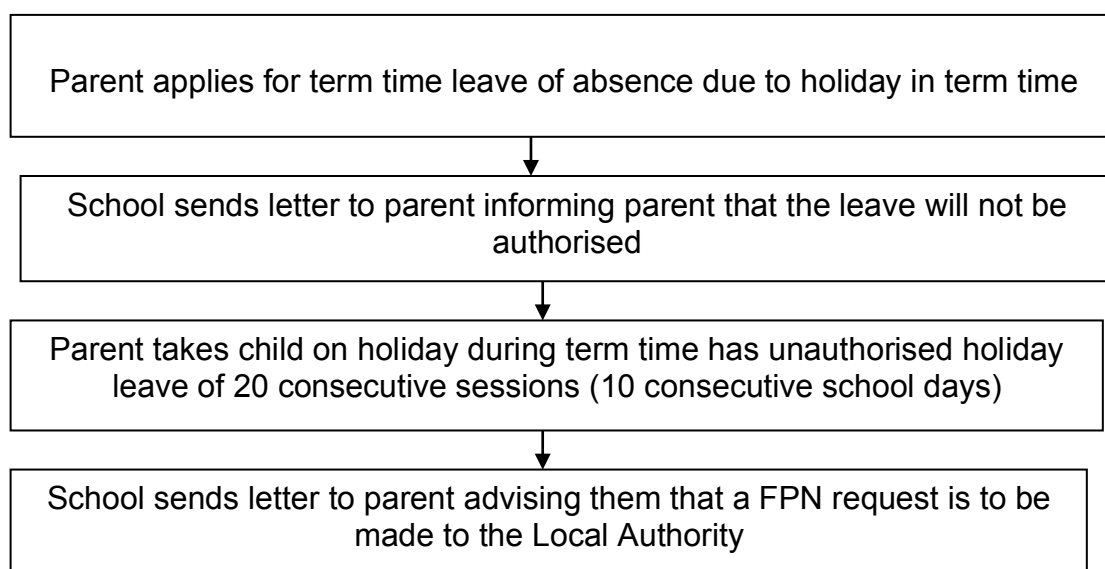
We will next meet on:

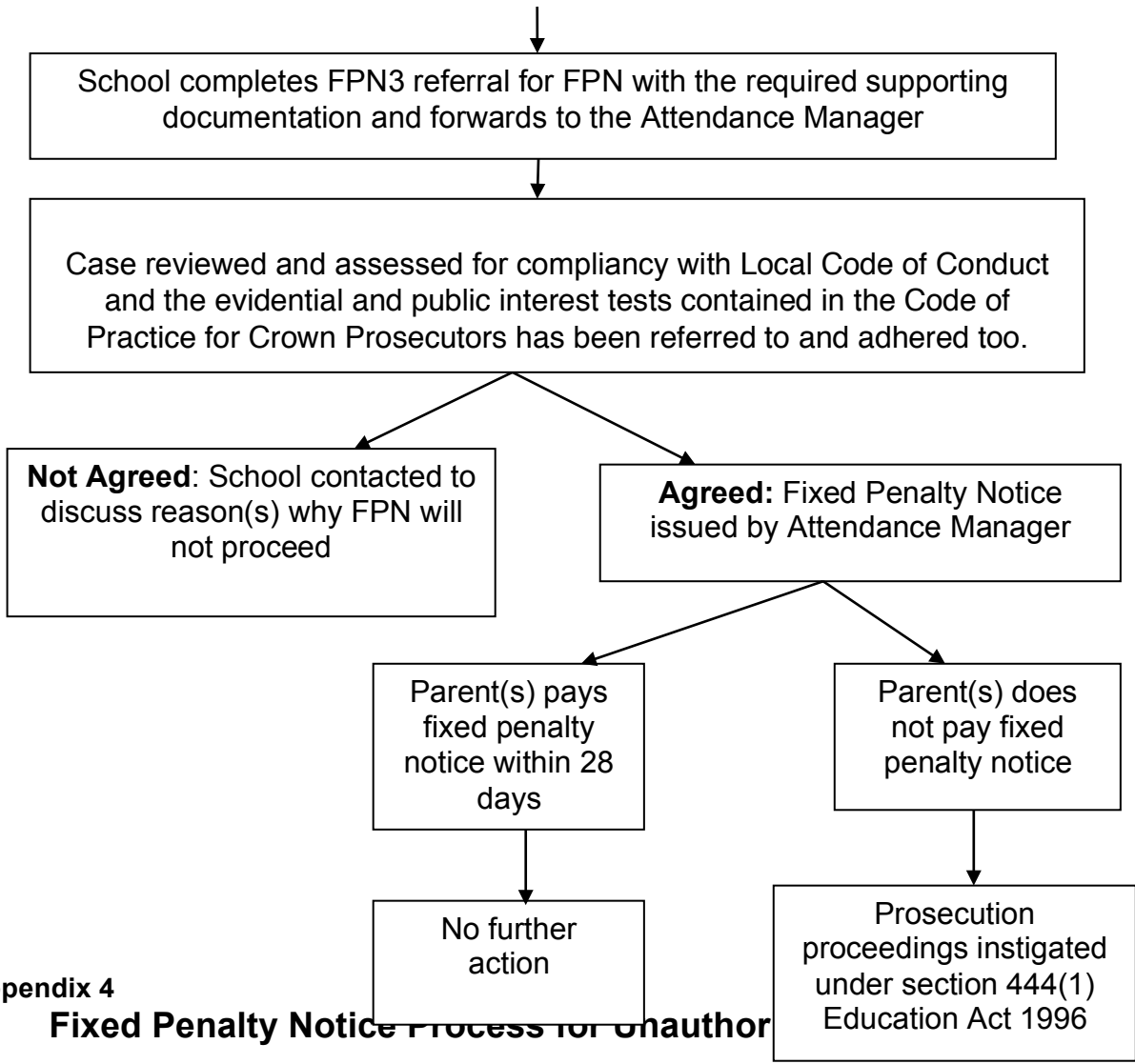
We will review this agreement on:

We will end this agreement on:

Appendix 3

Fixed Penalty Notice Process for Unauthorised Leave During Term Time





Appendix 4

Fixed Penalty Notice Process for Unauthorised

