



**Astrea Academy Trust**

## **Astrea Academy Sheffield: Secondary Attendance Policy**

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## 1. Principals, Aims, Legislation and Guidance

Regular academy attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximize the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident, and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the academy gates, and are often specific to individual scholars and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that academy is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all scholars want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Astrea Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that all scholars and their families understand the importance of attendance. Studies have shown that scholars who attend less than 97% of the time fail to achieve their potential.

## 2. Aims

Astrea Academy Sheffield aims to meet its obligations with regards to academy attendance by:

- Developing and maintaining a whole academy culture that promotes the benefits of excellent attendance and punctuality;
- Working with scholars and their families to reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Working with families to understand barriers to attendance, where there are concerns;
- Ensuring every scholar has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;

## 3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the academy attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on academy attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern academy attendance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [Working together to Improve School Attendance](#)
- [Children Missing Education 2016](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the academy census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 4. Academy Procedures

### 4.1. Recording Attendance

By law, all academies are required to keep an attendance register, and all scholars must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will mark whether every scholar is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

***N.B: Attendance registers should not be pre-coded***

*See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.*

Scholars must arrive at the Academy by **08:17** every day.

Arrivals after **08:17** will be recorded as **L**

Arrivals after **08:50** will be recorded as **U**. A **U** coding will affect a scholar's attendance percentage.

The register for the second session will be taken at **13:55**

### 4.2. Lates & Punctuality

It is an expectation of the Academy that scholars will arrive on time and be ready to learn. Lateness and punctuality will be monitored daily.

The academy may send a letter to parents/carers, by way of notification of our concerns in relation to their child's punctuality and may request a meeting to discuss the concerns in order to work together to resolve any issues.

Persistent lateness can result in a significant amount of learning time being lost, resulting in gaps in learning and can also indicate a safeguarding concern.

Please refer to the Behaviour Policy for sanctions on lack of punctuality and note that persistent lateness will result in being issued negative behaviour points.

*In exceptional circumstances (such as severe weather), the closing of registration may be delayed at the discretion of the Principal.*

### 4.3. Unplanned Absence

It is an expectation of the academy that parents/ carers will notify the academy on the first day of an unplanned absence for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health by 08:17

Parents/carers notify the academy of their child's absence unless agreed otherwise.

- Contact should be made with the Academy on **0114 5539110 option 3** before **08:17**
- Parents are also able to notify the Academy regarding their child's absence using the **MCAS app** before **08:17**

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

The academy will contact parents on a daily basis if they fail to inform the academy of an absence. The academy must be notified of the reason for a child's absence in order to safeguard the child. Absence is monitored carefully at the academy. The academy will make home visits to those scholars who are not in academy.

Only the Principal can authorise absence from the academy. Absence will not be authorised unless the reason you offer is accepted by the academy.

#### 4.4. **Planned Absence**

##### Medical or dental appointments

The academy strongly discourages medical and dental appointments been made during academy hours. Where this is not possible, the scholar should be out of academy to attend their appointment only. It is expected that parents/carers inform the academy of the appointment as soon as possible; failure to do this will result in an unauthorised absence.

##### Leave of absence during term time

By law, Principals cannot grant any leave of absence to scholars during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**We define exceptional to mean very rare, unusual or unforeseeable circumstances.**

All parents/carers must complete a leave of absence form 10 days in advance where possible.

Astrea Academy Sheffield do not authorise any term time holidays and/or visits abroad. A meeting with the named attendance officer for your child's year group will be required after submitting a leave of absence form. Fixed term penalties will be issued as required.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request. However, the law is clear and gives principals very little discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the scholar's parents belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller scholars travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy.

### Re-integration following long-term absence

Where a scholar has been absent for a prolonged period, due to illness, the academy will provide support for the scholar in consultation with parents/carers and any professionals involved to ensure a successful return to the academy.

#### 4.5. Legal Sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from the academy, where the child is of compulsory academy age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether to apply for a penalty notice rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as Leave of Absence, (for example holidays) taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded scholar is found in a public place during academy hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent/carer or withdraw the notice (this is in consultation with the Academy)

#### 5. Attendance Monitoring

Attendance monitoring includes:

**Daily Monitoring** by the attendance team including:

- checking registers
- contacting any family that has not informed academy of their child's absence and followed set procedures
- monitoring trends

**Weekly Monitoring** including whole academy attendance monitoring and analysis, identifying attendance patterns and trends.

VAN meetings are used to monitor individual scholar attendance and identify scholars who need support and identify staff and targeted actions for those cases.

Individual scholar attendance is monitored to check on:

- Improvement in attendance.
- Patterns of non-attendance.
- Number of absences.
- Vulnerable scholars.
- Scholars with low attendance.

**Termly Monitoring** is led by senior leaders to monitor data. This includes analysis of scholars and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of attendance codes, days of poor attendance and from this data analysis devise specific interventions to address areas of poor attendance for individual cases / cohorts of scholars. The impact of academy wide attendance strategies is monitored termly. Analysis is then used to inform future strategies linked to the attendance action plan and Academy Improvement Plan.

Attendance data, patterns and trends are reported to Local Governance Committees and Trust Management Boards half-termly.

## 6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

To promote excellent attendance and to recognise individual and collective high attendance or improvement, Astrea Academy Sheffield uses a range of rewards and positive reinforcement strategies such as:

- Astra's
- Personalised rewards for those with increased attendance
- 100% reward tickets given to scholars on a weekly basis
- Family based rewards such as days to Yorkshire Wildlife Park
- Food Fridays for those forms with the best attendance that week

## 7. Children Missing in Education

The academy will always follow up with parents/carers when scholars are not at the academy. This means we need to have a least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers/emergency contacts. Parents should remember to update the academy as soon as possible if the numbers change.

The academy recognises that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, and will follow guidance from Annex A: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023 and 'Children Missing Education' 2016 to promote their safety and wellbeing.

The procedures in this policy will be followed when dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help to identify the risk of abuse and neglect and to help prevent the risk of them going missing in the future.

The academy will inform the Sheffield Local Authority of any scholar who fails to attend the academy regularly, or has been absent without the academy's permission for a continuous period of 10 academy days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the academy and the Local Authority.

*Please refer to Appendix 2 of this policy.*

## 8. Scholars with Medical conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Some scholars face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include scholars who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have educational needs and disabilities. At Astrea Academy Sheffield, our ambition for good regular attendance applies to all scholars.

To support scholars with medical needs, the academy will:

- Ensure the scholar has a comprehensive health care (or similar) plan which addresses medical, educational social, emotional, and mental health needs, where needed.
- Consider whether additional support from external agencies (including the Local Authority and health services) would be appropriate and work together with those services to deliver appropriate support.
- Work with Local Authorities, families, and scholars to develop support approaches and strategies for attendance for scholars with special educational needs and disabilities including access to provision outlined in the scholar's education, health, and care plan.

The academy will contact their Local Authority Attendance & Inclusion Team when it is clear that a scholar will be away from academy for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative due to health needs, to establish additional support which may be required in order for scholars to continue their education.

### Part Time Timetables

All scholars, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education.

In very exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a

scholar's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a scholar from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

- A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution.
- A part-time timetable is not to be used to manage behaviour.
- There will be an identified senior leader who is responsible for monitoring the part-time timetable.
- Part-time timetables should not be used as long-term solution and formal written reviews will take place at least fortnightly and will include the scholar, parents/carers and other professionals as appropriate.
- In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the academy has agreed to a scholar being absent from the academy for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

## **9. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **9.1. Astrea Academy Trust**

- The Trust is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy on at least a half-termly basis. It also holds the principal to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Attendance data is presented at every Trust Management Board (TMB) or Local Governance Committee (LGC) meeting with Trust representatives and local committee members present.
- Trust Attendance Leads – work alongside academy attendance leaders to prioritise attendance improvement strategies and whole academy cultures.
- Trust Attendance Leads ensure academy regular training on attendance is available for academy staff.

### **9.2. The Local Governance Committee / Trust Management Board**

- Receive reports from the Principal and review the working of the policy.
- Regularly review attendance data and help leaders focus support on the scholars who need it.
- Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the academy and is known by the parents.

### **9.3. The Principal**

- The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the academy, and for monitoring academy-level absence data, reporting it to the Trust and the [TMB/LGC]
- The Principal will oversee and direct the academy's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied.
- The Principal will develop and maintain and whole academy culture that promotes the benefit of good attendance and maintains this ambition for all scholars.
- The Principal supports staff in monitoring the attendance of individual scholars, cohorts, and vulnerable groups.
- The Principal will ensure that there is a dedicated senior leader in the academy with responsibility for championing and improving attendance holding them to account.
- The Principal will determine (in collaboration with relevant senior staff) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested.

### **9.4. The Strategic Attendance Lead**

- Work with all attendance staff to ensure this policy is implemented consistently.
- Develop and maintain and whole academy culture that promotes the benefit of good attendance.
- Ensure good attendance is promoted and rewarded.
- Form positive relationships with scholars and parents.
- Ensure admission and attendance registers are accurately completed.



- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Monitor and evaluate progress towards attendance targets as part of the Academy Development Plan and target-setting process.
- Ensure that weekly attendance is tracked at VAN meetings and appropriate action is taken as a result.
- Ensure additional support and adjustments are made where required for scholars with additional needs.
- Make regular checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence.
- Arrange appropriate training for staff in liaison with the trust and local authority.
- Advise the Principal on any strategies that could be initiated or improved.
- Ensure that unaccounted-for absences are followed up appropriately.
- Work with staff, identified scholars and families at risk of poor attendance to understand and address reasons for absence, including any in academy barriers to attendance.
- Hold formal meetings with parents / carers where attendance is not improving.
- Will liaise (in collaboration with relevant staff) with the appropriate bodies (including the Local Authority's agencies) where necessary in order to improve attendance.

#### 9.5. **The Attendance Team**

- Monitor attendance data at academy and individual scholar level on a daily basis.
- Form positive relationships with scholars and parents .
- Report concerns regarding attendance and safeguarding to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensure good attendance is promoted and rewarded.
- Input / check daily attendance figures and follow robustly the daily procedures for following up attendance
- Ensure admission and attendance registers are accurately completed.
- Ensure that unaccounted-for absences are followed up appropriately.
- Work with staff, identified scholars and families at risk of poor attendance to understand and address reasons for absence, including any in academy barriers to attendance.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance concerns.
- Inform parents/ carers of scholars if attendance is a concern.
- Hold informal / formal meetings with parents/ carers where attendance is not improving.
- Monitor the attendance tracker on a weekly basis and input any actions taken.
- Contact parents over scholar absence patterns where appropriate.
- Liaise with the Attendance Team regarding training needs.
- Produce attendance data / statistics for the Attendance Lead and Principal.
- Signpost and support access to multi agency services where attendance is a concern.
- Work with Sheffield Inclusion and Attendance Team to tackle persistent absence.
- Work with scholars / parents on attendance plans, strategies, and interventions to improve attendance.
- Contribute to the evaluation of academy strategies and interventions.

#### 9.6. **Office / Admin Staff**

- Take calls from parents / carers about absence and record it on Bromcom in a timely manner.
- Retrieve messages from the App and record on Bromcom in a timely manner.
- Inform attendance leads for reasons of scholar absence.
- Follow first day absence procedures as outlined in the policy.
- Report concerns regarding attendance to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Form positive relationships with scholars and parents/ carers.

#### 9.7. **Teaching Staff**

- Record attendance daily in Bromcom, using the correct codes, and submit this information

immediately at the beginning of every lesson.

- Form positive relationships with scholars and parents/ carers.
- Hold regular conversations with scholars to promote attendance and identify any barriers to attendance.
- Raise any concerns regarding absence and or punctuality with the [PYL/HOY/Attendance Lead].
- Have initial conversations with parents/scholars regarding attendance concerns.
- Work with attendance / pastoral staff on interventions / adaptations for individual scholars to improve attendance.
- Report any concerns to the Safeguarding Team.

#### 9.8. Parents / carers

- Ensure their child attends every day the academy is open unless they are too ill to do so or have an authorised absence.
- To not arrange leave of absence during term time .
- To immediately inform the academy if their child is unable to attend including the reason for absence.
- Continue to liaise with the academy on each day of absence unless agreed otherwise by the academy.
- Wherever possible make medical appointments outside of academy hours.
- Ask the academy for support if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Attend and meet with academy staff with regards to attendance.
- Inform the academy of any change in circumstance that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Ensure that all contact numbers held by the academy are up to date.
- Form a positive relationship with academy staff, recognising the importance of good attendance.

### 10. Associated Policies

This policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and support for children with medical needs.

This Policy should be read alongside the Academy's:

- Astrea Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Astrea Inclusion Policy
- Astrea Exclusion Policy
- Academy Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions

## 11. Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on academy attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Scholar is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Scholar is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Scholar arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Scholar is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the academy
D	Dual registered	Scholar is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Scholar has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Scholar is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Scholar is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the academy
W	Work experience	Scholar is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Scholar has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded / Suspended	Scholar has been suspended/ excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Scholar has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Academy has been notified that a scholar will be absent due to illness (not medical or dental appointment)
M	Medical/dental appointment	Scholar is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Scholar is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 scholar is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence	Scholar from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the academy
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Scholar is on a holiday that was not approved by the academy
N	Reason not provided	Scholar is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time <b>(No longer than 5 days)</b> )
O	Unauthorised absence	No reason for absence established or the academy is not satisfied that the reason is an authorised absence
U	Arrival after registration	Scholar arrived at academy after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in academy	Scholar of non-compulsory academy age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or scholar is in custody
Z	Scholar not on admission register	Register set up but scholar has not yet joined the academy
#	Planned academy closure	Whole or partial academy closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## 12. Appendix 2 – Children Missing in Education Flowchart

