



Attendance Policy

Tall Oaks Academy Trust

Version 1

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Tall Oaks Academy Trust

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REVISION OF POLICY

Date	Version	Description/Change	Author	Approved by

Introduction

Government guidelines for attendance are currently 96%. The Trust aims to meet this target. Individual academies within the Trust will have separate targets in line with the context and age range of that Academy.

Attendance Legislation

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient, full time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs that the child may have. This can be regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act. In cases where the above duty is not being fulfilled by the parents Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. Full payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice discharges the parent(s) from liability for conviction of the above offence.

Regular attendance at school is a prerequisite for student achievement. Absence whether it is long term, frequent or occasional leads to missed experiences and may cause fractured social relationships which encourages an increased pattern of non-attendance.

Tall Oaks Academy Trust constantly monitors and evaluates the progress of its pupils. The Trust works in partnership with pupils, parents and outside agencies to support all families to ensure pupils make good progress. We recognise that pupils who are absent will miss important educational opportunities which may affect their progress.

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification, which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with external agencies, where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

Aims

Tall Oaks Academy Trust:

- seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for achieving their potential;
- strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, so that each member of our community feels safe and valued;
- will ensure staff work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends regularly and punctually;
- will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate external agencies to provide information, advice and support;
- will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of all pupils to improve their attendance and punctuality;
- will always challenge those parents and pupils who give low priority to attendance and punctuality and invoke proportionate penalties.

Responsibilities

Parents/Carers

Securing a high level of attendance requires parents/carers to work closely with the Trust. It is essential that parents/carers:

- ensure their child arrives on time for school;
- notifies the academy if their child is ill on the first day and every following day of absence unless a fixed time is given at that point before 9.30am;
- respond to any emails and ARBOR messages sent requesting additional information;
- contact the Academy at an early stage about any concerns they may have about their child's attendance;
- recognise that the Academy will be concerned when any child fails to meet the attendance target and work with us to improve their child's attendance;
- attend meetings at school regarding attendance at mutually convenient times whenever possible;
- attend review meetings when requested by the Head of School or Executive Headteacher or his/her representative.
- Provide evidence of any child's medical appointments, when they will have to be absent from school.

Children

- To know it is the law to come to school every day and arrive on time
- Be ready to learn
- To have the right equipment/kit to participate in all lessons

Whole School Staff

- To actively encourage regular attendance in school through reminders, conversations with children, conversations with parents, questioning absences, seeking information after absences.
- To promote and raise the profile of regular attendance in assemblies, parents evenings and parental meetings.

Governors and Senior Leadership

Trustees' responsibilities are:

- To ratify and adopt a Trust-wide Attendance policy
- To review the use of exclusions across the Academy Trust (permanent exclusion and fixed term suspension)
- To monitor Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to attendance and exclusion figures across the Trust.

Local Governing Bodies responsibilities are:

- To ensure effective processes are in place to monitor the attendance and safety of pupils in the school.
- To review and monitor attendance and pupil absences (as part of the KPIs) and provide challenge to the Head of School regarding % not in line with national data or improving.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) responsibilities are:

- To lead the development of a Trust- wide Attendance policy for ratification by Trustees
- To monitor the KPI figures reported from the Head of School relating to attendance of pupils – support and challenge to ensure improvement is secured.
- To monitor the levels of attendance in individual schools and report to Trustees

Executive Leaders responsibilities are:

- Head of Inclusion to support and hold to account the Attendance and Healthcare Officer for improvements in attendance.
- To implement strategies and procedures to improve attendance, decrease PA and reduce permanent exclusions and fixed term suspensions.

Head of School's responsibilities are:

- To report the KPI figures to the Executive Team and the LGB relating to attendance of pupils
- To report on attendance and pupil absences (as part of the KPIs) to LGB and the Executive team.
- To ensure the correct number of school sessions are sat and the dates of the school terms and holidays are correct
- To attend ABS meetings and have oversight of the case load and procedures related to attendance.

Tall Oaks Academy Trust

At Tall Oaks Academy Trust we have clear and concise systems and procedures and protocols to promote good attendance and punctuality.

Registration

The accuracy of the attendance register is of paramount importance both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions that may be required.

Session starts	Mercer's Wood Academy	White's Wood Academy	Castle Wood Academy
Morning registration	8.40 am	8.40 am	8.40 am
Morning registration closed	09:10am	09:10am	09:10am
Afternoon registration	FS/Yr. 1 - 12.30pm Yr. 3/4/5 – 12.55pm Yr. 2/6 – 1.20pm	Yr. 3/4 – 12.45 Yr. 5/6 – 1.15	12.45

It is imperative that the data entered is accurate and that there is a mark for every pupil. Every pupil must fall into one of three categories of present, absent or late. We all have a duty of care and are responsible for safeguarding pupils. Therefore, it is vital the information is accurate.

The Head of School is responsible for maintaining the system of recording accurate reasons for non-attendance. The Head of School may delegate some of the administration to the Business Team members and the Attendance and Healthcare Officer. (The Head of School will ensure a rigorous system of liaising with parents takes place and will ensure the correct codes are used to record authorised or unauthorised absences by regular scrutiny of the records.) All reasons for absence are recorded on the Management Information System by the Business Team. All Heads of Schools within the Trust are directly accountable to the Executive Headteacher for the attendance at their individual school.

All registers will close at 9.10 am. A child who arrives after this time will be marked as late as well as an unauthorised absence.

E.g. Mercer's Wood Academy school day starts at 08:40am. 08:40am – 09:10am (any pupils arriving late should be marked as Code "L" late before register closes) 09:10am onwards (any pupils arriving late should be marked as Code "U", late after register closes)

E.g. White's Wood Academy school day starts 08:40am. 08:40am -09:10am – Code L. 09:10am – onwards Code U

E.g. Castle Wood Academy school day starts 08:40am. 08:40am -09:10am – Code L. 09:10am – onwards Code U

Pupils leaving the Academy during the day must be collected by an adult and signed out at Reception. This includes lunchtimes.

Pupils who are persistently late before close of registration will be monitored closely by the Attendance and Healthcare Officer and if deemed necessary, appropriate action will be taken by the Head of School.

Punctuality

Good punctuality at school is essential for pupils to achieve their full educational potential. It is also vital for pupils to form good habits for later life. Procedures to address late arrivals to school include:

- An Arbor app message to parent(s)/carer(s) when their child arrives late to school or a phone call if necessary
- Punctuality data from the registers are analysed and monitored every two weeks
- If a child is persistently late to school – letter communication via Arbor will be sent to parent(s)/carer(s) detailing the concern. This will include the following information: attendance %, number of late arrivals and %, total minutes late and average number of minutes late.
- If persistently punctuality continues – a supportive meeting will be arranged with parent(s)/carer(s) to discuss reasons behind late arrivals and create a supportive plan for improvement.
- If a child's late arrivals are after the close of registration – they will count as an unauthorised absence for the AM session. These lates will be included within absence % and parents may incur a FPN from the education authority if persistent/ reaches FPN criteria (Unauthorised absence equivalent to 4.5 days in a 6 week period).

Use of Data

The efficient and speedy collection of the data is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. At Tall Oaks Academy Trust we use attendance data to monitor:

- individual absence and lateness to both Academy and lessons;
- patterns of lateness and absence and the identification of trends by Year groups;
- seasonal patterns;
- patterns of the nature of unauthorised absences;
- analysis of the attendance of vulnerable groups e.g. SEN (Special Educational Needs), EHCP (Education and Healthcare Plan), EAL (English as an Additional Language), LAC (Looked After Child), FSM (Free School Meal) and disadvantaged pupils; Pupil Premium and Service Children
- the percentage of unauthorised absence that triggers 'persistent absence' e.g. 10% unauthorised absence over a 6 week period. (Equivalent to 4.5 days in a 6 week period, including 'unauthorised lates' after 9.10 a.m.

All staff members need to be alert to changes in attendance patterns and raise any concerns with the Attendance and Healthcare Officer. Teachers should monitor their own pupils' attendance with regard to safeguarding concerns.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

School Attendance, DfE, August 2020 stipulated that:

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

An *Authorised Absence* is where Tall Oaks Academy Trust accepts there is good reason for absence. An *Authorised Absence* requires a specific and detailed request from the parent/carer. Any pupil whose parent does not provide a reason for absence will be deemed to have been absent without an acceptable reason and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence is any absence which does not fall into the following categories:

- absence due to illness;
- absence due to religious observance sanctioned by the religious body to which the parents belong;
- medical appointments (evidence of such appointments may be requested for attendance records by the Attendance and Healthcare Officer);
- personal reasons which the Trust may authorise absences for such as close family member's funerals, family crises, emergency hospital visits. This list is not exhaustive and the Executive Headteacher will make the final decision or delegate it to the Head of School;
- visits to the Lincolnshire Show (1 day only unless a participant or exhibitor);
- any other exceptional reason agreed by the Executive Headteacher

Only the Executive Headteacher can authorise a request for an **Authorised Absence** during Term time, although this can be delegated to a Head of School if the Executive Headteacher is unavailable. The Trust is not obliged to accept the explanation offered as a valid reason but will remain proportionate and fair within the current Government Guidelines in the best interests of the child.

The Directors of the Trust have decided that the decision of the Executive Headteacher is final.

Parents should not take a child on holiday in term time; it can be disruptive both to the child's learning and their entitlement to the full curriculum.

Requesting an Authorised Absence

The Executive Headteacher has been instructed by Tall Oaks Academy Trust that he/she should not grant an *Authorised Absence* unless in exceptional circumstances in line with the ***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013***.

An application must be made by completing a **Request for Leave in Exceptional Circumstances form**, available from the School Office, well in advance (at least 7 days) of the requested leave period, giving as much detail as possible. Parents can also speak to the *Attendance and Healthcare Officer* if they need to discuss details of a personal nature which they need to keep confidential who will then liaise with the Executive Headteacher and Head of School. The Executive Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the *Authorised Absence*. Where an *Authorised Absence* is granted, the Executive Headteacher will decide how long is appropriate regardless of the length of the request. An example of this may be an extended period for a funeral, without any context which would make it necessary for the child to be away from school.

Attendance Legislation and Parental Responsibilities

The law states that parents are responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance at school. A parent who fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age (5-16 years) who is registered at a state school can be the subject of legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court if this fails to happen.

Fixed Penalty Notice- (FPN) are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. FPN's may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion.

The Trust will issue warning letters to the parent(s) and the Local Authority will be instructed to issue the fine and take forward any prosecutions for non-payments of fines. All proceeds from the fines remain with the Local Authority and are not given to the Trust. Parent(s) should understand non-payment of a fine may lead to prosecution.

Prosecution - For each child who fails to attend school regularly, each parent could be

- fined up to £2,500 and/or
- sentenced to up to three months imprisonment.

Education Supervision Orders- the Local Authority has the option of applying for an Education Supervision Order in respect of your child. The Local Authority must consider whether this action is appropriate before starting proceedings (under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). Education Supervision Orders are:

- part of the Children Act 1989;
- heard in the Family Proceedings Court;
- intended to support parents in fulfilling their legal responsibilities;
- only suitable when there is co-operation between the Local Authority and the family.

Education Supervision Orders are not criminal proceedings. They're not designed to punish you or your child. Education Supervision Orders usually last for one year, but can be extended for up to three years. If an Education Supervision Order is granted, the Local Authority will take on some parental responsibilities in connection with education. For example, you would not be able to move your child to another school without the Local Authority's agreement.

Any queries about decisions made by the Executive Headteacher regarding authorisation of an absence needs to be referred to the Board of Directors using the Trust's Complaints Procedure although parents/carers need to understand this decision has been delegated to the Executive Headteacher and additional evidence will be needed to overturn any decision. The Local Authority is not part of the authorisation process and their decision to consider the issue of fixed penalty notices is based on information submitted by the Trust. They cannot advise on unauthorised absence requests and will refer the parent/carer back to the school.

Encouraging Attendance through Good Practice and Rewards

At Tall Oaks Academy Trust academies, attendance is encouraged by rewards such as:

- an Attendance Award Cup for the best class attendance awarded weekly in a Celebration Assembly;
- a record of attendance on 'End of Year' reports;
- postcards sent home for improved attendance;

Living with COVID-19 (DfE, 30th March 2022).

Following expert advice, we now know that **Covid presents a low risk of serious illness to most children and young people**, and most of those who are fully vaccinated.

Due to high immunity in society, a greater understanding of the virus and improved access to treatments, we can now focus on how we live with COVID-19.

Should my child still go to their childcare or education setting if they test positive for Covid?

No. From 1 April, anyone with a positive COVID-19 test result will be advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for five days, which is when they are most infectious. **For children and young people aged 18 and under, the advice will be three days.**

Will my child's school or college still be taking measures to prevent Covid?

All settings should have in place baseline infection prevention and control measures that will help to manage the spread of infection:

- Ensuring all eligible groups are enabled and supported to take up the offer of national vaccination programmes including COVID-19 and flu.
- Ensuring occupied spaces are well-ventilated and let fresh air in.
- Reinforcing good hygiene practices such as hand washing and cleaning.

From April 2022, healthy 5-11 year olds will also be offered the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccinations will take place outside of schools in vaccination centres, pharmacies, GPs and walk-in centres. Parents of 5-11 year olds will receive a letter from the NHS with further information. [Online bookings](#) for 5-11 year olds will open in April. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

NHS (21st April 2022) <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

How long to stay at home and away from others

If you've tested positive for COVID-19:

If you have COVID-19, you can pass on the virus to other people for up to 10 days from when your infection starts. Many people will no longer be infectious to others after 5 days.

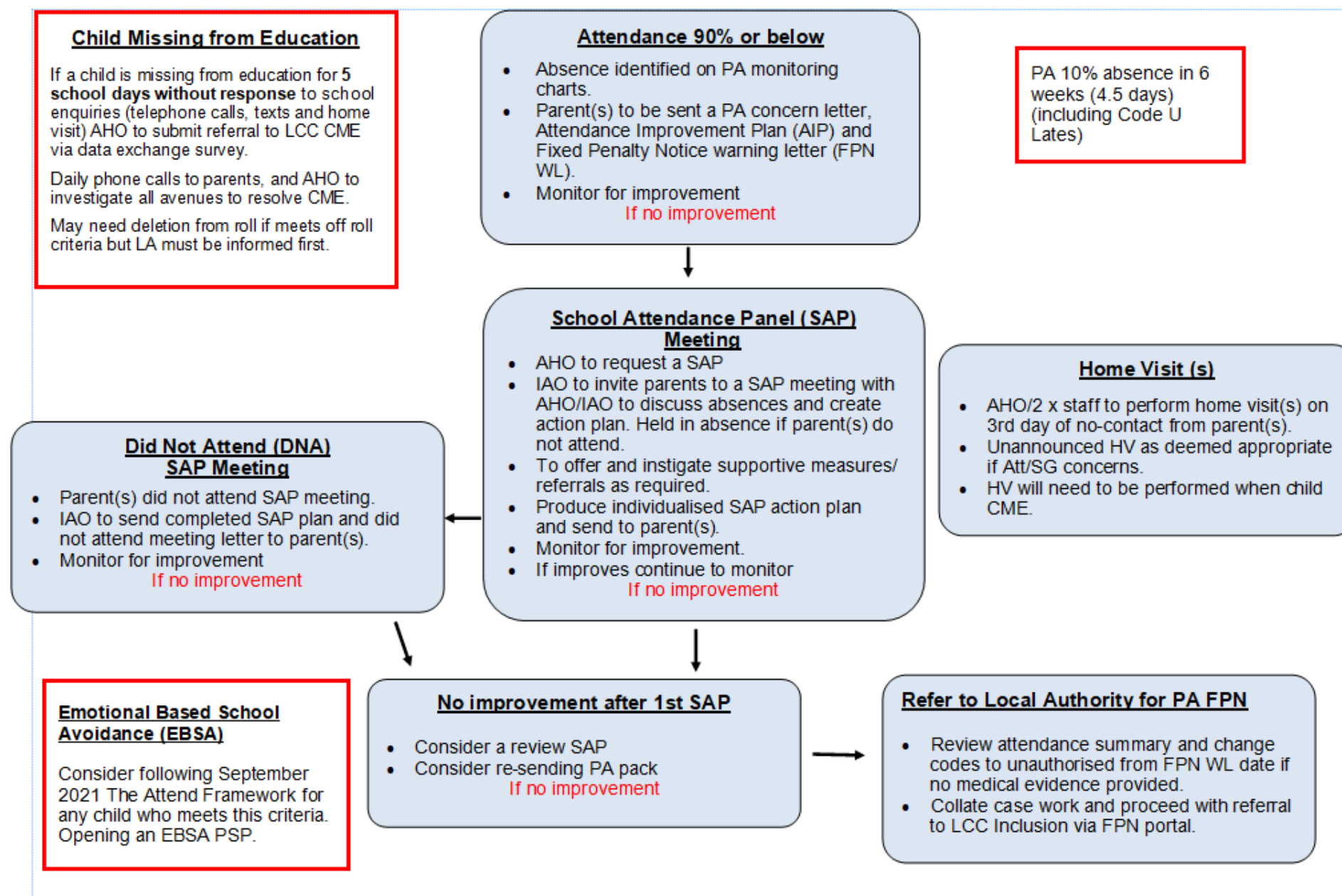
You should:

- try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days
- avoiding meeting [people at higher risk from COVID-19](#) for 10 days, especially if their immune system means they're at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, even if they've had a COVID-19 vaccine

This starts from the day after you did the test. If a child or young person aged 18 or under tests positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days. This starts from the day after they did the test.

Children and young people tend to be infectious to others for less time than adults. If they're well and do not have a temperature after 3 days, there's a much lower risk that they'll pass on COVID-19 to others.

ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART FOR MANAGEMENT OF PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM



L= Late arrival **before** the close of register

U= Late arrival **after** the close of register

PUNCTUALITY FLOW CHART

Registration closes at 09:10am

