



CITY OF LONDON ACADEMY
ISLINGTON

WHERE STUDENTS SUCCEED

Attendance & Punctuality Policy



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Responsibility:	COLAT Education Team
Reviewed/Updated:	October 2023
Next Review Date:	September 2025

Introduction

The City of London Academy Islington recognises that regular school attendance is crucial if students are to achieve their full potential. The academy will strive to provide a welcoming environment for all students. Staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

The academy will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards to acknowledge the efforts of students in maintaining their attendance and **will challenge the behavior of those students and parents who do not prioritise attendance and punctuality.**

The City of London Academy Islington will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide information, advice and guidance.

Aims of the Attendance Policy

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students.
- To develop a systematic approach to collating and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive communication between home and school.
- To maintain a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To work effectively with the Islington Education Welfare Service and other services and agencies.
- To monitor and review the policy.

Parents' Responsibilities

Section 7 of [The Education Act \(1996\)](#) says parents/carers must make sure their child is regularly attending school or 'otherwise' (i.e. another suitable alternative). [Section 444\(1\)](#) of the Act says parents are guilty of an offence if their child does not regularly attend school.

The Department for Education (DfE) [statutory guidance for schools](#) (page 5) reiterates that responsibility for ensuring attendance lies with parents, including caregivers or anyone with 'parental responsibility'.

- Parents (or the person with parental responsibility) are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school.
- Parents/carers should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, correctly dressed and prepared to learn.
- Parents/carers should avoid, if possible, making non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. Parents/carers must inform the academy and provide medical evidence for any appointments either by medical letter/card/text/email as proof of evidence stating the date and time of the appointment at least 24 hours in advance of the appointment. All students are expected to attend school before and/or after their appointment.
- Authorised absences include illness and emergency treatment during school hours. Unauthorised absences include looking after siblings, caring for a parent, birthdays, shopping, general trips, etc. **Only the academy, within the context of the law, can approve or authorise absence – not parents/carers.** When a parent/carer has notified us of the reason for a particular absence, the school does not have to accept the explanation as a valid reason for absence. Absence without a valid reason, or where no explanation is offered at all, is recorded as unauthorised absence.

- Parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of the school during the school day without medical or official documentation.
- Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time and the school is unable to authorise any holidays taken during the academic year. Any such requests should be submitted to the Headteacher in advance, in writing, for permission to be granted/authorised. Any such unauthorised absences will be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

Students' Responsibilities

Students are responsible for making sure that their attendance and punctuality is maintained at the highest level (97% to 100%).

- They should attend school and all of their lessons on time, equipped and ready to learn.
- Students must follow the correct procedure when arriving late to school after the close of registers. Students must sign in at reception and will receive a sanction if they have not followed correct procedure.
- Any problems with attendance should be discussed with a form tutor or a member of the pastoral team.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Ensure the register is completed accurately within the first five minutes of the lesson and will amend during the lesson if a student arrives late.
- Follow school attendance procedures and alert the pastoral team via the 'behaviour admin' email if a student does not arrive to class but was recorded as present in previous lesson(s).
- Be proactive in providing a positive ethos which places high value on attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with the pastoral team regarding attendance issues.
- Report the absence of any pupil who is known to be in school.
- Alert the pastoral team and Attendance Officer of any attendance and punctuality patterns.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will:

- Check registers as a matter of priority every morning. Any absences will be checked with the Academy office in case a parent/carer has called to report an absence.
- Ensure that physical checks are made in the morning for students who are absent from morning registration.
- Send absence texts to all parents/carers by 10.00am at the latest.
- Make follow-up calls to all parents/carers whose child has not arrived to school.
- Record all calls made and matters discussed on students' SIMS records for reference.
- Generate weekly attendance figures for year groups.
- Meet regularly with Heads of Year and keep updated records for future reference. The Deputy DSL, SENDCO and members from the pastoral team may also attend these meetings and will contribute to discussion and decisions.
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer regarding persistently absent students.

Heads of Year

Heads of Year will:

- Meet with the Attendance Officer to discuss attendance concerns.

- Share individual monthly attendance and punctuality data with pupils for self-monitoring purposes.
- Liaise with parents/carers to discuss concerns regarding poor attendance.
- Celebrate high attendance in assemblies.
- Assist in following up absences at times when the Attendance Officer may not be available.

The Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service is responsible for discharging the local education authority's legal duty to ensure that all registered students of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually. If a student fails to attend regularly and attempts by the Attendance Officer and pastoral team have failed to ensure a return to regular attendance, then the Education Welfare Officer will monitor attendance and can refer the case to the local authority to take legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Education Welfare Officer will provide supporting evidence for fixed penalty notices and any court proceedings. The local authority will issue warning and FPN letters to parents/carers for persistently absent students.

Some strategies that are used when concerns about persistent absence are raised, include:

- Telephoning parents.
- Texting, emailing or writing to parents/carers.
- Meeting students.
- Arranging meetings between school and parents/carers.
- Visiting students' homes.
- Liaising with Social Services and other agencies.

SLT overseeing attendance

Weekly, half-termly, termly and annual reports regarding attendance will be generated. Patterns will be analysed over time to check improvements are being maintained and that there are no circumstances which are inadvertently causing attendance to decrease. Data for various groups will be analysed to ensure that all pupils are accessing their full-time education.

Attendance targets

Attendance targets are set annually and The City of London Academy Islington will ensure that absence and punctuality is monitored regularly. Our attendance target is 97%.

Information will be published weekly for year groups and form classes during assembly and form periods. Individual data will be shared formally on a monthly basis and personal records will be maintained. Whole school data will be shared weekly with all staff. This will reinforce the commitment of the school to promote high levels of attendance.

Reporting absence by parents

Regular and punctual attendance of students at school is expected and is strictly enforced; it is both a legal requirement and essential in order for students to maximise their learning. Parents will be notified if their child's attendance falls below 96%. In case of illness, the school should be notified by telephone as soon as possible and/or by email. If an absence is not confirmed by parents, it is assumed that the absence was unauthorised, and will be recorded as such. A text message will be sent to parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence.

Registration

- Students must go to line up each morning.
- The form tutor or subject teacher (or cover teacher) will take electronic registration, recording a mark for each student present.
- Any student who is absent when the register is taken and who subsequently arrives, must sign in at the academy office.
- In the afternoon, the formal registration will be at the start of Period 5.

Lateness

- Students are expected to be registered at their official start time in the morning and at the start of their afternoon lesson.
- Students arriving after these times must sign in at the academy office. They will be recorded as late and marked in the register as such. Failure/refusal to sign in will result in an additional sanction.

All students are expected to be punctual. Late arrival to school means a disorganised start to the day, disrupts lessons, and students will miss important information from their form tutors or assembly. All parents must contact the school about their child's late arrival before they arrived to school, or the student will be sanctioned. Parents and carers can also face warning and Fixed Penalty Notices if their child is persistently late.

Reporting Absence/Lateness to Parents/Carers

- If the academy has not received notification from a parent/carer regarding their child's absence, a text message will be sent on the day of absence.
- Heads of Year will record those students whose falling attendance is cause for concern and liaise with SLT, the Attendance Officer, the Education Welfare Officer, inclusion manager and parents/carers.
- The number of sessions (i.e. half day) missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence is recorded on students' annual reports and will be reported on any reference that is requested.
- The number of times a student is late for registration is also recorded on the annual report.
- Attendance and punctuality reports will be shared with outside agencies who have a legitimate reason for requesting them.
- Truancy from school is treated seriously and parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

100% attendance and punctuality are rewarded with certificates of achievement and incentives are put in place to encourage students to maintain improved attendance. Letters/texts regarding concerns and improvement are also sent to parents at least half-termly.

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Illness

If a student is absent due to illness, the absence will be authorised if the school accept the reason as valid, and the student's attendance is 96% or more. This needs to be confirmed by a parent/carer on the day of absence by a call/email to the academy office and then in writing upon return to school. If there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, the school will not authorise the absence.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Appointments should be made out of school hours as far as possible. If a medical or dental appointment has to be made during the school day, the school must be informed at least 24 hours in advance for the absence to be authorised. All students must inform the Attendance Officer of their appointments, so they may have permission to leave their lesson and sign out at the main reception. Please note that medical appointments for students whose attendance is below 96% will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

All students must sign out before they leave school to attend appointments and sign in again when they return. Students will be issued with permission to be excused from their lesson if necessary. Parents/carers may be contacted to verify appointments.

Family Bereavements

The school recognises that the death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event and the academy has the discretion to authorise such absences.

Day of Religious Observance

Absence for participation in a day exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong, will be authorised. This permission is not given on two consecutive days. Advance notice is appreciated.

Minding the house/Looking after siblings/Looking after parents

In the vast majority of cases, such absences will be unauthorised.

Shopping during school hours

It is highly unlikely that such absence can ever be justified and is therefore unauthorised.

Special occasions/circumstances

The Headteacher will determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not and each application will be considered separately. Absences for social occasions such as birthdays and family outings will be unauthorised.

Family Holidays

If parents/carers take their child out of school for family holidays, these absences will be recorded as unauthorised, and the parents/carers may receive a **penalty notice**.

First month of a new academic year

All absences will require medical evidence to be authorised as a one-day absence in the first four weeks will result in the student's attendance falling below 96%.

First and last week of a half-term

All absences require medical or official evidence to be authorised.

Mock and official exams

We will not authorise absences during mock and official exams without medical evidence or official documents. Furthermore, in the absence of formal documentation to evidence the reason for absence during the examination period, the Academy will be unable to apply for 'special consideration' from the exam board.

Sixth Form Students

We have the same expectations regarding outstanding attendance and punctuality for our sixth form students as for any other year groups. Additionally, should a sixth form student's attendance fall below target, they will not be eligible to apply for or continue paid duties in the Academy and they may have all or part of their bursary payment withheld.

Attendance Monitoring/Action Pathway

Absence day	Action to take
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send text message. ● Call home, speak to parent/leave message if no response.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Email/text parents/carers. ● Call home if reason unknown, speak to parent/leave message if no response. ● Call second emergency contact if parent doesn't pick up. Leave message if necessary.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Absence referred to EWO as child is now deemed missing in education. ● Email parent. ● Inform social worker or other professional working with family.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home visit. ● Send formal attendance letter home. ● Inform Safer School Officer to carry out background police check on address. ● Email parent re absence and inform that a missing child report may be sent.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Call home if reason unknown, speak to parent/carer of leave message if no response. ● Email parent/carer. ● Access and Engagement team informed and decisions made regarding further action.
Further	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If there was no genuine reason for the long absence then a fine should be issued. ● Any ad hoc absences leading to attendance dropping below 90% should receive a warning letter regarding a fine (and making clear the attendance expectation). If no improvement is seen within a week then a fine should be issued. ● Any repeat of long term absence <u>without good reason</u> will receive a fine.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Request assistance from staff speaking another language if needed. ● Reporting issues to Children's Social Care when they already have involvement and attendance is becoming an issue.

Persistent Absence Pathway

Actions taken

- **Below 96%** - attendance concern email or letter sent to parents/carers. Medical evidence required for further absences.
- **Attendance continues to decline** – persistent absence letter sent requesting a parental meeting and/or home visit. Education Welfare Officer (EWO) letter sent outlining agreements made at the parent meeting. If medical condition is affecting student's attendance, the student will be referred to appropriate support service.
- **Parent/carer failed to attend meeting** – attendance will be monitored by the EWO and a final warning letter sent to parent.
- **Attendance continues to decline** – EWO refers student's attendance to Local Authority.

Please note

- At any point in the process a one-to-one conversation with the student concerned about their absence will take place.

STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON ATTENDANCE

1. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
2. Children Missing Education - September 2016
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf