



**GEORGE
SALTER
ACADEMY**



Attendance Policy

Policy prepared by: Safeguarding Officer

Responsible for Policy: Tina Dale

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At George Salter Academy we demand the highest level of attendance from all our students so they may develop their full potential during their time at school. It is our aim to maintain a culture of excellence, attendance and punctuality. Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. Everyone associated with the school – students, parents, all teaching and support staff and external agencies must do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work.

Duties and Responsibilities

Senior Leader i/c Attendance

- Oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality, initiating whole school policies as required. This will be achieved by liaison with the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant members of the Pastoral, Inclusion and Learning Support Teams.
- Support the HoH, Pastoral Managers, Form Tutors and teaching staff in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with the Attendance Welfare Officer (AWO) and Pastoral Managers (PM) to devise any necessary re-integration programmes for students who are persistent absentees (PA) or at risk of long term absence.

Pastoral Managers

- Oversee and monitor attendance and punctuality for their House (including the monitoring of relevant sub-groups).
- Liaise with form tutors and highlight problems that require action.
- Liaise with the VP where there are concerns about individual students or forms.
- Meet weekly with the AWO to sustain good communication and identify and intervene with individual students who are PA or at risk of becoming PA. Refer students to the AWO if they are a persistent problem or have missed targets.
- Make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence for all students where the reason for absence is unknown, as the first wave of contact.
- Act on daily information from staff concerning student absences or habitual lateness.
- Inform parents of any students whose attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern by following the school's attendance and monitoring procedure.
- Intervene early to arrange and attend meetings with parents and relevant staff where there are attendance issues (e.g. subject truancy).
- Promote good attendance through assemblies and updating of House Attendance Boards.
- Offer support and work closely with the parents/carers of students who are persistent absentees or at risk of becoming so.
- Conduct home visits when there are issues with punctuality and/or school refusal.

Form Tutor

- Encourage all students in their form to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Record reward points for students with 100% weekly attendance.
- Direct any correspondence from parents/carers with regard to absences to the relevant Pastoral Manager.

- Keep an overview of students' attendance; follow up unexplained absences and check patterns of absence and poor punctuality.
- Liaise with PM to pass on concerns about individual students.
- Inform students of the need to complete a leave of absence form prior to a planned absence.

Subject Teachers

- Take an electronic register at the start of each lesson.
- Pass on any concerns about absentees from lessons to the Pastoral Manager as soon as possible.

Attendance Welfare Officer

- Compile all attendance data and information for relevant staff.
- Make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence for all students where the reason for absence is unknown, as the second wave of contact following the Pastoral Manager (first wave).
- Contact parents/carers should any student leave the site without permission.
- Work closely with the HoH and PM to monitor students who present concerns.
- Produce attendance certificates to reward 100% attendance.
- Work closely with relevant staff to establish caseload and feedback information on work in progress.
- Liaise with PM to ensure communication is up to date.
- Attend school attendance meetings organised by PM to monitor individual students' attendance.
- Organise all panel meetings where necessary.
- Carry out home visits.
- Monitor PA students' re-integration with the PM after long term absence.
- Complete legal paperwork for any legal action, legal action could result in each parent being fined up to £2,500 and receiving a criminal record.

Student registration requirements

There are four broad classifications in attendance registers:

Present – the student is on the premises at the time of registration.

Approved Educational Activity – the student is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site, for example field trip, educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.

Authorised Absence – an absence authorised by the school which includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other circumstances where the school deems attendance to be inappropriate. There is no entitlement for students to be guaranteed leave of absence for holidays with parents/carers during term time. A decision will be made at the Principal's discretion with regard to authorising absence in 'exceptional' circumstances.

Unauthorised Absence – an absence where the student does not have good cause to be missing from school. Unauthorised absence can be defined in the following ways:

Truancy – this is action by students who fail to attend school when they should, including leaving the Academy premises after registration. It also includes action by parents/carers who initiate unauthorised absence by students or who collude with it. Shopping trips, day trips or absence to look after someone else would all constitute examples of unauthorised absence.

The Academy will aim to highlight and resolve any difficulties regarding a student's attendance as early as possible, using our rigorous monitoring and intervention procedures and pastoral support programmes to help solve any problems.

Attendance Procedures

Registration

- Registers must be taken promptly at the start of each lesson and during form time. Staff must contact the relevant Pastoral Manager as soon as possible if there are any concerns about absentees.
- Anyone taking students out of school for any reason must supply the Attendance and Welfare Officer and Reception with a list of names.
- Staff must inform colleagues of any students taking part in events in school that require students to be off timetable.

First Day Contact

The Attendance and Welfare Officer (AWO) will organise first day contact when reasons for absence are unknown, utilising the support of the Pastoral Managers. Initially, Pastoral Managers will call parents/carers where absence is identified with no contact received from home. The second wave of contact will be made by the AWO via text messages and telephone calls. There will be occasions when school staff visit homes when we have concerns about persistent or sporadic absence.

Outstanding Absences

Any outstanding or unexplained absence will be followed up by the Attendance Officer or Pastoral Managers via contact with parents. Until contact is made, absence will remain unauthorised.

Exit/Entry to School During The Day

Students who need to leave during the school day must bring a letter from home and/or an appointment card. Students should bring the note from home to their Pastoral Manager when it is time for them to sign out and sign back in at the Reception on their return. We would encourage all appointments to be made after 3.00pm, so as not to impact on your child's learning.

Where a student is ill during the day, the Pastoral Office will discuss the pupil with the Senior Leader i/c Attendance who will make the final decision on whether to seek parental advice on their remaining at the Academy during the day. The authority to send home, via contact with parents, rests with the Senior Leader i/c Attendance. If they are not present, the Vice Principal Inclusion will be consulted.

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Punctuality

All students are expected to arrive to school on time and be ready and punctual to lessons. This is a minimum expectation. Students should arrive for 8.40am. Students are expected to be in registration by 8.45am ready to start learning. Any student arriving late must sign in at the Pastoral Office. After 8.45am, students will be marked as late and will receive a 20 minute same day lunch detention. Students arriving after 9.00am will be subject to a 50 minute detention. We would be grateful for your support in ensuring that your child arrives on time.

All these procedures are very important as in the event of a fire drill it is vital there is an accurate record of who is on the Academy site at that time. It is equally important that all George Salter staff sign in and out using the swiping system and at times the book located in reception.

Attendance Concerns

The Pastoral Team meet weekly to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns. Pastoral Managers track the attendance of all students within their house and use the Academy's Attendance Protocol (see appendix 1) to ensure consistency between year groups. The protocol is built around early intervention and constant communication with parents in order to maximise and maintain good attendance.

Long term absence – students who are long term absentees for whatever reason, often find the return to school problematical. There are both academic and social difficulties which students may need time to overcome. For some students this may involve a personalised re-integration programme. The programme will be devised by the appropriate HoH/PM and may include use of the STEPs Centre (Support Towards Educational Progress/Success), a partial timetable or pastoral support from the behaviour support team. Parents/carers will be involved throughout the reintegration process and staff will be informed by the PM.

The government have recently passed new legislation regarding students missing school to go on holiday. **The new regulations mean that from 1st September 2013 Head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Exceptional circumstances do not include family holidays, visiting relatives or friends, spectating at sporting or other events, looking after family members who are unwell, babysitting younger family members, birthdays or shopping.

If you choose to take your child out of school during term time without leave of absence being granted then it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance can be fined £60 (per parent, per child.) If the payment is not made within 21 days this increases to £120.

Please contact Mrs A Parmar or Mrs L Lonergan (Attendance and Welfare Officers) in the first instance with any queries or the Senior Leader i/c Attendance should you wish to discuss the matter further.

Leave of absence for other reasons

Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping for uniform, birthdays, day trips, etc. If parents/carers wish their child(ren) to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, special family events, or to participate in sporting or musical competitions etc, application should be made in writing, in advance where possible, or by telephone to the Pastoral Manager.

Rewards and Incentives

Good attendance is acknowledged in form tutor periods, assemblies, celebration events and at award evenings. Attendance is monitored on a daily basis and students achieving above year group targets are recognised. The Academy rewards system recognises weekly and half-termly 100% attendance (with reward points, vouchers, fast track passes and 100% enrichment activities) and encourages students to monitor their own attendance and punctuality. Letters and/or certificates are issued each half term to students achieving 100% attendance.

We are also keen to acknowledge the support of parents/carers in working with us to maximise outcomes for our young people.

Reporting Absence

What to do if your child is ill:

If your child is too ill to attend school, parents/carers should contact the relevant Pastoral Manager as soon as possible (before 9.30am)

Telephone on 01215534665 and choose the appropriate house office. The telephone system allows callers to leave a message 24 hours a day.

Please give your child's name, tutor group, the reason for the absence, and how long you expect the absence to last. We ask that you contact us each day that your child is absent. On your child's return following an absence, we request that parents/carers write a brief note explaining the absence. The student should hand the note in to their Pastoral Manager.

What to do if your child has an appointment:

We ask that, where possible, you make routine medical and other appointments out of school time. If this is not possible, we require notification in advance. Please telephone or provide a note from home or appointment letter/card to confirm the appointment. In most cases, your child should attend school before the appointment and return to the Academy afterwards wherever possible. Students should bring a note from home to the PM Office when it is time for them to sign out and sign back in on their return. The Academy will only authorise one session absence for a medical appointment.

Automated messages to parents/carers:

We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously. If the Pastoral Manager has received no reason for absence and a student is absent from Registration automated texts are sent daily to the contact numbers of parents/carers. Texts are sent on a daily basis, even where your child has been absent

due to illness on previous days. We cannot assume that your child is still ill unless you have notified us. We would not wish to put your child at risk by failing to contact you. Please ensure your child realises the importance of attending registration on time and getting their present mark. Parents/carers can also help by ensuring that we hold up to date contact details.

Elective Home Education

Parents/carers wishing to home school are required to notify the Academy in writing of their intention to educate at home. The school has a statutory duty to inform the Local Authority. This will result in your child being removed from the Academy roll and the Local Authority will contact you to discuss your intentions of Home Education.

A Local Authority guide for parents considering home tuition is also available to view below

http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200295/schools_and_learning/333/elective_home_education

Children Missing from Education

Please see our Children Missing Education Policy on our website here:

<http://www.georgesalter.com/documents/policies/Children-Missing-Education-Policy.pdf>

Child Exploitation

George Salter Academy recognises that students with poor attendance are at an increased risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Child Sexual Exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

George Salter Academy uses guidance provided from Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)

Key indicators of children being sexually exploited may include;

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late;
- Regularly missing academy or education or not taking part in education;
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Receiving unexplained gift or gifts from unknown sources

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- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Having multiple phones
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Seen at strange meeting places (hotels or known places of concern)
- Having older boyfriends / girlfriends
- Self-harming / drug or alcohol misuse
- Injuries (physical)
- Normal procedures for reporting any concerns would apply for this too

Staff should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins. Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country.

Although academies have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the academy. However, it should be clear to the academy who has parental responsibility. Academy staff should notify the designated safeguarding lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The academy itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements. On admission to the academy, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

Tackling Poor Attendance – See Appendix 1 and 2

Government statistics show there is an almost perfect link between those students with the highest attendance rates and those who achieve the best results. Every 5% of school a student misses each year equates to two school weeks so a child with 85% attendance will miss half a term of school in a year. It is therefore vital that we work with parents/guardians to maximise attendance.

Our aim is for the Academy to have an attendance rate of more than 95%. It is the expectation of the school that all students *will* achieve at least 95% attendance.

Each student will know their attendance percentage for the autumn term and will keep a weekly record of their attendance in their planner. The aim is to maximise the number of students in the gold category and to motivate students to move up a wise up level. Each term parents will receive a wise-up colour coded letter showing the attendance for the term and the progress made from previous terms.

Appendix 2 shows the different levels for the Academy's Attendance "Wise-Up" programme, where students and parents are reminded regularly of their current level of attendance and it's impact on their education.

Appendix 1

<u>Attendance Monitoring and Intervention Procedures</u>		
Action	Person Responsible	Stage
An attendance printout will be sent weekly to Form Tutors (FT) detailing the previous week's attendance.	Pastoral Manager	
Attendance will be discussed by FT and students will record their attendance in planners. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by FT/Subject Staff should be passed immediately to Pastoral Managers (PM).	Form Tutor/ Subject Staff	
Contact will be made with parents/carers through the Academy's text system on the first day of absence for any student absence not reported. Any absence causing concern will be discussed between the Pastoral Manager and the Attendance and Welfare Officer at their weekly meeting.	Attendance and Welfare Officer	
Student Attendance below 92% A letter will be sent home explaining that a student's absence is now being monitored. PM will contact parents by telephone to discuss the child's attendance to offer support to address any issues. The AWO will monitor attendance for three weeks. If attendance has not risen, then parents will be required to attend a meeting in school with their child's PM and the AWO. If parents are unwilling to co-operate, or genuinely unable to attend, the AWO will carry out a home visit.	Pastoral Manager Attendance and Welfare Officer	
If attendance has not improved within the 4 week monitoring period (likely to be close to 90% or below), or if attendance has fallen rapidly, parents will be invited to either: - A school attendance meeting with the PM and AWO. - A medical action planning meeting with the School Nurse, PM and AWO (this is in the event that the medical needs protocol has not already been initiated) Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance. This will be monitored over a further two week period.	PM AWO School Nurse	
After the two week red monitoring period, if targets are met parents will be contacted by the Attendance and Welfare Officer to congratulate the student and the family. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises If targets are not met, the PM and AWO will discuss a referral to the Attendance and Prosecution Service for legal action to be considered.	AWO PM	
Attendance and Prosecution Service protocol will be followed. A 15 day monitoring period will be set up If there are no improvements during this period the AWO will complete a court file for the Attendance and Prosecution Service to submit to the local magistrates' court. A subsequent penalty notice may then be issued following the parent/carer's court appearance.	AWO	

Appendix 2 – Wise Up

Gold	<p>Your attendance is above 97%. (Having less than 6 days absence in the year) You are 'WISED UP' on attendance. As well as being an excellent attendee you will almost certainly achieve the best grades you can manage and have a real opportunity in further education or the world of work</p>
Silver	<p>Your attendance is 95% plus. (Having less than two weeks absence in the year) You are 'GETTING WISE' You could achieve the grades that will give you real opportunities to continue your studies or in the world of work.</p>
Bronze	<p><u>Your attendance</u> is 90 - 95%. You 'COULD BE WISER!' They will be missing up to 20 days each school year. A full month lost. This will make it difficult for you to achieve your best.</p>
Red	<p>Your child's attendance is between 86-90%. You are missing up to 40 days in the school year. You 'NEED TO WISE UP!' You are missing so much time from school that it will be difficult for you to keep up to date with lessons or work. It will be hard for you to get involved and enjoy school.</p>
Wise-up	<p>Your child's attendance is below 85% You need to 'WISE UP and TAKE ACTION NOW!' They are missing so much time from school that it will be almost impossible for them to keep in touch with lessons or work! It will be almost impossible for you to get involved and enjoy school.</p>

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Appendix 3

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM

The government have recently passed new legislation regarding students missing school to go on holiday. **The new regulations mean that from 1st September 2013 Head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Exceptional circumstances do not include family holidays, visiting relatives or friends, spectating at sporting or other events, looking after family members who are unwell, babysitting younger family members, birthdays or shopping.

If you choose to take your child out of school during term time without leave of absence being granted then it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance can be fined £60 (per parent, per child.) If the payment is not made within 21 days this increases to £120.

This form should be completed following a meeting with your child's Pastoral Manager / Head of House and returned to the Principal at least two weeks before the proposed absence.

To: The Principal, George Salter Academy

I wish to apply for leave of absence for:

Child's Name: _____ Tutor Group: _____

Start date: _____ to _____ Number of school days: _____

My child will return to the Academy on: _____

Please outline the exceptional circumstances that have led to your request:

Signature of Parent / Guardian: _____ Date: _____

REPLY

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I consent to your request for leave of absence.

I am unable to consent to your request for leave of absence and ask you to contact me at the Academy as soon as possible.

(Tick as applicable)

Yours sincerely,

Mr P Patel

Principal