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Students



Attendance Policy – Students

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure has been adopted by the Governing Body of Ormiston Maritime Academy on 18 March 2014.
- 1.2 Ormiston Maritime Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent Academy attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending the Academy regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance (National guidance states 94% is good).
- 1.3 The whole Academy community – students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and Academy Governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good Academy attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.4 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government guidance and statutory regulations. The Academy will ensure that all members of the committee know of the policy and have access to it.

Equality and Diversity : All policies are intended to ensure that no-one is treated in any way less favourably on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic or social origin, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, age, religion / belief or political / other personal beliefs.

2 Aims

- 2.1 Ormiston Maritime Academy seeks to:
 - Maintain attendance to at least 94% over the academic year
 - Encourage student attendance through rewarding high attendance.
 - Work in partnership with students, parents, the Education Welfare Service and external agencies to promote good attendance.
 - Develop / encourage positive routines to promote punctual behaviours.

3 Academy's roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (teaching and support) at Ormiston Maritime Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent Academy attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils / students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the Academy community and look forward to coming to the Academy every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

3.2 Attendance Leader

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the Academy's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the Academy. This persons job

title is “Assistant Principal - student”, and will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good Academy attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body annually. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

3.3 Registration

- i) The Academy is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers / tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes.
- ii) The register is a legal requirement and should be taken at 8.35 am and period 4 (12:10).
- iii) Students who are absent should be marked with no explanation received (N).
- iv) Students arriving after 8.45 am for registration should be recorded late (L) by the Form Tutor.
- v) Lateness after 8.45 am will be recorded by the Student Services as (L). Students who arrive after 9.00 am will be recorded by Student Services as present for health and safety purposes, but will be given an unauthorised late mark (U) which counts as an unauthorised absent mark for the morning session for attendance purposes.
- vi) Students should only be marked present (/) for the am/pm marks if they are actually in the presence of the teacher.
- vii) Class registers must be taken every lesson.
- viii) Students who arrive late for lessons should be marked late (L) via SIMS.
- ix) Where a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was subsequently authorised by the Academy or unauthorised by the Attendance Manager.
- x) Pupils / students who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the Academy’s policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 5.5 on page 8)

3.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the Academy in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the Academy as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the Academy at a later stage, the register will be amended by the Attendance Manager in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Attendance Manager.
- ii) Ormiston Maritime Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child’s education as authorised absence, and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-Academy attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Ormiston Maritime Academy will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child’s absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil’s home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Academy.**
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the Academy **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised.

iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances :

- (a) where leave has been granted by the Academy in advance, for example –
- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the local authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission may be granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see section 6 on page 8 for the Academy's policy on term-time holidays);
- (b) where the Academy is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (c) where the pupil / student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of Academy hours wherever possible, and to return their child to the Academy immediately afterwards – or send him / her to the Academy beforehand.
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong;
- (f) the student lives more than three miles and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by parents / the local authority;
- (g) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be :

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the Academy is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil / student is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil / student is shopping during Academy hours;
- the pupil / student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil / student is absent from the Academy on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil / student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

3.5 *Approved educational activity*

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the Academy will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

3.6 *Staff training*

The Academy Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

4 Collection and analysis of data

4.1 The Attendance Manager will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body (see paragraph above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the Academy's target. The data will inform the Academy's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

4.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance (PA).

4.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

5 Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance.

5.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Ormiston Maritime Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and Academy meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed prominently in the Academy.

5.2 *First day calling*

Ormiston Maritime Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned / text on the first day a pupil / student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils / students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the Academy will send a letter to them by first class post.

5.3 *Meeting with parents*

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's / student's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the Academy will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil / student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

5.4 *Referral to the Education Welfare Service*

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil / student is failing to attend the Academy at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

5.5 *Lateness and punctuality*

5.5.1 Pupils / students are expected to arrive at the Academy, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils / students who arrive after the register closes (see para. 3.3 (v) on page 5) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the Academy is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil / student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil / student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence (see para. 5.3). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

5.5.2 Pupils / students who arrive late for the Academy but before the register closes are monitored for frequency of lateness. If the lateness is persistent, the parents will be requested to give an adequate reason. If this is not sufficient to resolve the problem, the EWS is informed.

5.5.3 For health and safety reasons it is important that the Academy knows who is in the building. Pupils / students arriving late should therefore report to Student Services. **It is important that all pupils / students arriving late follow this procedure.**

5.5.4 For the same reason it is important that pupils / students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to the Academy later in the day report to Student Services.

5.6 *Post-registration truancy*

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil / student goes missing from the Academy having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil / student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Ormiston Maritime Academy takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil / student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the Academy will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

6 **Term-time holidays**

6.1 Term-time holidays are intended for students whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

6.2 Ormiston Maritime Academy will consider every application individually. Its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off from the Academy for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of booking the intended holiday.

- 6.3 Ormiston Maritime Academy will consider authorising holidays for :
- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
 - when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
 - parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

- 6.4 Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised :
- cheaper cost of holiday;
 - availability of the desired accommodation;
 - poor weather experienced in the Academy holiday periods; and
 - overlap with beginning or end of term.

6.5 Ormiston Maritime Academy will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

6.6 Ormiston Maritime Academy will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of examinations.

6.7 Parents that choose to take unauthorised holidays in Academy time may be subject to a penalty notice.

7 Parents / carers responsibilities

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring young people receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Ormiston Maritime Academy.

- 7.2 Ormiston Maritime Academy expects parents / carers will :
- ensure their children attend the Academy regularly;
 - support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
 - not expect the Academy to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from the Academy.

- 7.3 Parents will also be expected to :
- notify the Academy on the first day of absence, by telephoning the Academy before 9 am, or by speaking to the Attendance Manager;
 - ensure their children arrive at the Academy on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
 - work in partnership with the Academy, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
 - contact the Academy without delay if they are concerned about any aspect of their children's Academy lives. Ormiston Maritime Academy will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8 Pupils / students responsibilities

- 8.1 All students should be aware of the importance of regular Academy attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending the Academy regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or form tutor.
- 8.2 Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from the Academy they should give their class teacher or form tutor a note from their parents to explain the absence. Students also have a responsibility for following the Academy procedures if they arrive late.

9 Governors responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

- 9.1 The Governing Body of a maintained Academy shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the Academy are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the Academy.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 Regular Academy attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes.

Be healthy –

- attendance at the Academy supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the Academy curriculum teaches children to be healthy

Stay safe –

- the Academy has a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend the Academy regularly

Enjoy and achieve –

- good Academy attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings.

Make a positive contribution –

- membership of an Academy community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others.

Achieve economic wellbeing –

- good Academy attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.