



# The Consortium Trust

*Where together excellence and pupils thrive*

## Attendance Policy

### 1 AIM

- 1.1 The aim of the Trust's Attendance Policy is to provide an environment which encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. Regular school attendance is vital in ensuring that children maximise the educational opportunities available to them while safeguarding their personal safety and well-being. The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, pupils and all school staff. We expect our pupils to attend school every day.

This policy refers to the Department for Education 'School Attendance' guidance document (July 2019)

### 2 PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:-

- 2.2 *"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence". Parents of pupils with additional needs can seek independent advice and support from Contact a Family by clicking on the following link.*

<https://www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/education-health-social-care/education/handling-absence-from-school/>

- 2.3 The school implements in full; The Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

- 2.4 Following the High Court Judgement Isle of Wight case, (9 September 2016) updated advice has been issued. The Supreme Court has subsequently heard an appeal in respect of the previous judgement. On 6 April 2017 the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that a child fails to attend school regularly if they fail to comply with the rules prescribed by the school. Therefore, as set out in Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 (**the Act**), in this case Mr Platt was guilty of an offence. The case was returned to the Magistrates Court, where Mr Platt was given a 12-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay £2,000.

The Supreme Court decision is of importance to local authorities, schools and parents across England and Wales because it clarifies the meaning of regular school attendance. Prior to this decision uncertainty existed around the correct interpretation of the word '**regularly**' in this context - the Supreme Court has concluded that the term means in accordance with the school's rules.

- 2.5 From the 1<sup>st</sup>. September 2007, the Education Attendance Service on behalf of local authorities will be issuing fixed penalty notices in the following situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- > Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.
- > Where a pupil fails to attend school regularly, referrals can be made with just one unauthorised absence and is at the Academy Head's discretion;
- > Where a pupil has accrued ten sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a six week period.



# The Consortium Trust

*Where together excellence and pupils thrive*

2.6 The current fine for a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days for each parent for each child.

The fine increases after 21 days to £120 if paid within 28 days.

Failure to pay the fine at 28 days may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failing to ensure regular attendance at school. Further information can be found in the 'FPN Information leaflet'

2.7 If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's absence. Ideally this should be by telephone on the first day of absence and confirmed in writing. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

2.8 Under legislation there are four reasons for authorising absence:

(1) Absence in accordance with regulation 7 "exceptional circumstances".

(2) Sickness, parent has to prove or unavoidable medical appointments.

(3) Religious observance.

(4) Lack of transport and school not within walking distance i.e. 2 miles for a child under 8, 3 miles for a child 8 years and older. Parents are responsible if out of catchment.

2.9 **Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time.** If a parent (as defined in law) wishes to seek an authorised absence in accordance with regulation 7 "exceptional circumstances" a written request completed on the school form in force at the time must be completed wherever possible a minimum of 5 days prior to the start of the requested absence. The form is provided on the Trust's and school website and a paper copy is available from the school office.

## 3 PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties which might prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or a member of the Pastoral Support team.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence.

Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late, i.e. signing in and reporting directly to the school office.

3.2 Pupils and their parents should be aware that:

- A 90% attendance rate means a pupil is missing one half day of lessons every week.
- If that pupil has a 90% attendance rate through KS1 & 2 they will have missed one half of a school year in that time!
- A pupil with an 80% attendance rate over 5 years misses one complete year of school
- In attendance terms that would mean the pupil has missed 40 days of education in a school year, just over 1 day per week.
- Therefore if pupil's attendance remains at 80% from year 1 to year 11 they will miss more than 2 full years of education.



# The Consortium Trust

*Where together excellence and pupils thrive*

3.3 Historically statistics show that as pupils move to secondary school:

- > 94% attendance = Very good chance of 5, 9-5 Grades.
- > 93% attendance = Good chance of 5, 9-5 Grades.
- > 92% attendance = Fair chance of 5, 9-5 Grades.
- > 90% attendance = Less than 50% chance of 5, 9-5 Grades.
- > 88% attendance = Less than 35% chance of 5, 9-5 Grades.

3.4 YOUR attendance at school is really important.

3.5 **The Trust has an overall attendance target of 96%; this is our 'regular' bench mark**

3.6 Note that data refers to national data and does not acknowledge that some pupils with specific and additional learning needs may not achieve the correlated GCSEs stated. This is historical data and does not account for the change in methodology at secondary school and should be used as indicative only.

## 4 SCHOOLS' RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 All staff will provide an ethos, which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### First-day calling

All Trust Academies have in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence, if the parent has not already called. This helps to identify at an early stage pupil who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible make contact with the first contact on our system, we will try all other numbers provided for the pupil. If we do not hear from the parent/carer by 10am, we will carry out a home visit to ascertain that the pupil is safe. If there is no response from the house, we will report the pupil missing to the police, and may make a referral to Children and Young People's Services. The safety of all pupils is of paramount importance to the Academy.

### Procedures for Dealing with Absence

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis. When a child's attendance drops below 96% a letter will be sent home to inform the parent and offer support where necessary. If the attendance does not improve and goes below 92% a further letter will be sent to parents inviting them to a meeting and advising them that any further absence will become unauthorised unless supported by evidence. Parents/Carers will also be informed about accumulated unauthorised absence by letter in order to avoid further unauthorised absence.



# The Consortium Trust

*Where together excellence and pupils thrive*

4.2 School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:-

- > Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- > Schools are legally bound to complete two registers – admissions and attendance;
- > Attendance registers are taken at 0855 closing at 0915 and at 1300 closing at 1315;
- > Registers will be retained for a minimum period of three full academic years;
- > Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence - only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence);
- > The responsibility for authorising absence is a delegated duty to the Academy Head's professional judgement;
- > Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- > Acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils or classes;
  - In addition, schools are required to produce written home-school agreements which include clear instructions about attendance and punctuality;
- > The school will closely monitor patterns in attendance and absence – looking for correlations between absence and attainment, discussing any issues and planning relevant interventions at weekly senior leadership team meetings.

4.3 The Trust has appointed a senior member of the Trust staff to act as the Senior Attendance Support and Enforcement Officer. Further information can be obtained by emailing [hoswisa@consortiumcademy.org](mailto:hoswisa@consortiumcademy.org) please mark subject of emails "Attendance".

**Additional documents:**

- > Pupil request for exceptional leave;
- > Fixed Penalty Notice Information Leaflet;
- > Fixed Penalty Notice referral form;
- > Fixed Penalty Notice example warning letter for schools;



# The Consortium Trust

*Where together excellence and pupils thrive*

## Document Control

### Changes History

Version	Date	Amended By	Details of Change
V2	05/08/17	Principal/CEO	To clarify the arrangements relating to FPN in light of High Court judgement To clarify the 'regularly' bench mark for CMAT schools To advise of additional independent advice available to families with a child that has additional needs To advise of the appointment and contact details of the SASEO
V3	07/05/2020	HOSWISA	Updated to include first day calling and procedures when dealing with absence

### Approval

Name	Job Title	Signed	Date
Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne	Principal/CEO	Electronic signature	23/9/16
Dawn Carman-Jones	On behalf of the Trust Board	Electronic signature	28/09/16

### Equality Impact Assessment

Date	Name	Details

**END OF DOCUMENT**