



# Policy for Attendance



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This policy is available on our academy websites and is available on request from the academy offices. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join the academies in our Trust and regularly thereafter through our newsletters and other relevant opportunities.

## 1. Introduction

At Ad Meliora Academy, we recognise that positive behaviour and good school attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a [wide range of evidence](#) as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our Trust Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our Trust ethos to:

- Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at the academies in our Trust.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Our policy outlines the Trust's commitment to attendance. Our policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents & carers, pupils, Academy Committee Members and Directors about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.

- Raising and maintaining a whole academy awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole academy community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of academy improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

**2.Promoting regular attendance**

At Ad Meliora Academy, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our Trusts’ vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

At each of our academies, the key staff with responsibility for the management of attendance are:

**Blenheim Park Academy**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
<b>Senior Attendance Champion</b>	Jill Graver	01485 528368
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	Jill Graver	01485 528368
<b>Named Academy Committee Member for Attendance</b>		01485 528368

**Greenpark Academy**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
<b>Senior Attendance Champion</b>	Jill Graver	01553 772018
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	Jill Graver	01553 772018
<b>Named Academy Committee Member for Attendance</b>		01553 772018

**Reffley Academy**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
<b>Senior Attendance Champion</b>	Helen Fendley	01553 671045
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	Helen Fendley	01553 671045
<b>Named Academy Committee Member for Attendance</b>		01553 671045

Improving school attendance is everyone's business, it is a shared responsibility by Academy Committee Members, Directors, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider academy community. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of Trust staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers information about attendance in our newsletters.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the Trust's target for attendance.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The Board of Directors of Ad Meliora Trust recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the Trust's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend the academy every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the Academy Committee to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the academy's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the academy engages and works effectively with the Norfolk Local Authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school/academy attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker or youth justice worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all academy staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the Trust's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Leadership Teams (including senior attendance champions) at Ad Meliora Trust will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole academy approach which reinforces good attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the academy's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Academy Committees and on a half-termly basis to the lead Academy Committee Member for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by Norfolk Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at Ad Meliora Trust will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole Trust approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of academy strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Undertaking regular attendance meetings with the Senior Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, and other relevant staff members.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole academy attendance.

- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of an attendance contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from the academy without contact from parents.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Ad Meliora Trust requests that parents:

- Ask the academy for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at the academy.
- Instill the value of education and regular attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the academy if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of academy hours.
- Inform the academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the academy by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with the academy, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both the academy and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the Trust's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the academy procedure if they arrive late. This will help the academy to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of an academy evacuation.

#### **4. Understanding types of absence**

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of other pupils. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the academy (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the academy. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

For the purpose of this policy, the Trust defines:

"Absence" as:

- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed
- Not attending the academy for any reason

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the academy is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

**Authorised absences** are morning or afternoon sessions away from academy for a genuine reason such as:

- An absence for sickness for which the academy has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the academy has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Leaving the academy for no reason during the day.
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the academy referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

## **5. Persistent and severe absence**

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' (**PA**) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the academic year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level



will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**' (**SA**). Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The attendance of all pupils at the academies in our Trust are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to Norfolk Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

## **6. Leave of absence**

We believe that children need to be at the academy for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Ad Meliora Trust, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the headteachers and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Each academy in our trust will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). Each academy will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the academy may make a referral to Norfolk Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, the academy will seek advice from Norfolk Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

## **7. Medical appointments and absence due to illness**

Parents should try to make appointments outside of the academy hours wherever possible. Where appointments during academy time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the academy in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of the academy for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole academy day for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the academy day, parents should provide the office with written confirmation of the appointment. No pupil will be allowed to leave the academy site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the academy's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend an academy-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.<sup>1</sup>

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and Norfolk County Council policies via the [Medical Needs Service](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

## **8. Pupil absence for the purposes of religious observance**

Ad Meliora Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the academy will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the academy.

## **9. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils**

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. We recognise that there are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. At our Trust, we have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their background whilst recognising the lifestyle and cultural traditions of GRT communities. In line with The Education Act

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<sup>1</sup> This is in accordance with the NSCP [Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited](#)

1996, Section 444(6) the academy will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child<sup>2</sup> and is unable to attend the academy because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school/academy as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school/academy (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. The relevant academy within our trust will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended the academy in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at the academy will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the academy of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the academy regarding proposed return dates.

## **10. Our Procedures**

### **10.1 Register keeping and recording**

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools and academies to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The key attendance times are as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

### Blenheim Park Academy

Start time	8:50am
End time	3:15pm
Pupils must arrive in school by: -	8:55am
The register for the first session will be taken at: -	8:55am
The register for the first session will be kept open until: - NB – not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins	9:25am
The register for the second session will be taken at: -	1:00pm
The register for the second session will be kept open until: -	1:30pm

### Greenpark Academy

Start time	8:40am
End time	3:00pm
Pupils must arrive in school by: -	8:40am
The register for the first session will be taken at: -	8:40am
The register for the first session will be kept open until: - NB – not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins	9:10am
The register for the second session will be taken at: -	1:00pm
The register for the second session will be kept open until: -	1:30pm

### Reffley Academy

Start time	Nursery 8:45am, EYFS-Y6 8:30am
End time	3:00pm
Pupils must arrive in school by: -	Nursery 8:45am, EYFS-Y6 8:30am
The register for the first session will be taken at: -	Nursery 8:50am, EYFS-Y6 8:35am
The register for the first session will be kept open until: - NB – not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins	Nursery 9:20am, EYFS-Y6 9:05am
The register for the second session will be taken at: -	EYFS & KS1 – 12:45pm KS2-1:00pm
The register for the second session will be kept open until:	EYFS & KS1 – 12:50pm KS2-1:05pm

### 10.2 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from the academy, parents are expected to contact the academy by telephone call, or via Pupil Asset on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

The academy office staff can be contacted as follows:

Academy	Telephone	Email
Blenheim Park	01485 528368	<a href="mailto:office@blenheimpark.norfolk.sch.uk">office@blenheimpark.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Greenpark Academy	01553 772018	<a href="mailto:office@greenpark.norfolk.sch.uk">office@greenpark.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Reffley Academy	01553 671045	<a href="mailto:office@reffley.norfolk.sch.uk">office@reffley.norfolk.sch.uk</a>

**If a child is absent from the academy, the parent must follow these procedures:**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before the register closes.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before the register closes.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

**Blenheim Park Academy:**

Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Mrs J Graver	01485 528368
Academy office staff	Mrs L Black	01485 528368
Contact for more detailed support on attendance	Di Parkinson (Parent Support Adviser)	01485 528368

**Greenpark Academy**

Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Jill Graver	01553 772018
Academy office staff	Mr E McGahren Mrs D Stevens	01553 772018
Contact for more detailed support on attendance	Di Parkinson (parent support adviser)	01553 772018

**Reffley Academy**

Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Ms H Fendley	01553 671045
Academy office staff	Ms M Twaite Mrs L Smith	01553 671045
Contact for more detailed support on attendance	Mrs C Hodgson (parent support adviser)	01553 671045

**If your child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:**

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in the academy after close of register and where no reason for absence is known. We will telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.

We will also inform a pupil’s social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from the academy in line with statutory requirements. We will also inform a pupil’s social worker and/or youth offending team worker if their name is to be deleted from the academy register.

### **10.3 Late arrival at the Academy**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

At Ad Meliora Trust all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the academic year. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. All pupils arriving after the register has closed are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to provide a reason for their lateness. If their arrival is before the register closes it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

All pupils arriving on or after the register officially closes will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Unauthorised lateness could result in the academy referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the parent support adviser, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to the academy on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and, celebrating good class and individual punctuality.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

### **11. Support Systems**

At Ad Meliora Trust we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or at the academy. Parents are encouraged to inform the academy of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour at the academy, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the academy identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The academy will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is causing a concern and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Parent Support Adviser;
- Create a personalised action/support plan, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate or undertake an Early Help Assessment & Plan with you;
- Refer the matter to an external agency for multi-agency support, or consult with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures if no contact has been made with parents by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate).
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

## **12. Attendance interventions**

Each academy has a staged approach to supporting regular attendance including:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Early intervention in addressing attendance concern with parents

Each academy will investigate and offer support to any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

## **13. Part-time timetables**

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education and it would not be in their best interest to do so. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

In line with Norfolk County Council [guidance](#), we will notify the Attendance Team of all part-time timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

## **14. School attendance and the Law**

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school/academy at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

### **15. National Framework for Penalty Notices**

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

For further information see the Norfolk Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalties regarding school attendance.

### **There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours.**

In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

### **16. Deletions from the register**

At Ad Meliora Trust, we will add and will only delete pupils from our school rolls in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our academy; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. Each academy will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school/academy and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.



We follow Norfolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Ad Meliora Trust will follow Norfolk County Council's [Children Missing Education procedures](#) when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, the academy will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

### **17. Related policies**

To underpin the values and ethos of our Trust and our intent to ensure that pupils at our academies attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Safeguarding Including Child Protection
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs who Cannot Attend School
- Admissions
- Special Educational Needs
- Inclusion and Behaviour

### **18. Statutory Framework**

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE \(August 2024\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(January 2015\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2023\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(December 2023\)](#)

### **19. Appendices**

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

## **Appendix 1: Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – guidance for parents**

### Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities

At Ad Meliora Trust our aim is to collaborate with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This guidance is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and school and academies must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

### The important legal information – New from August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools and academies in England. This threshold is 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1<sup>st</sup> penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Norfolk, where a pupil's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices

will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. There is no reduced sum available in this instance.

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

### Requests for leave of absence

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) advises all schools and academies that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school/the academy. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'

Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools and academies will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

### Support with ensuring regular school attendance

If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact:

Academy	Telephone	Email
Blenheim Park	01485 528368	<a href="mailto:office@blenheimpark.norfolk.sch.uk">office@blenheimpark.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Greenpark Academy	01553 772018	<a href="mailto:office@greenpark.norfolk.sch.uk">office@greenpark.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Reffley Academy	01553 671045	<a href="mailto:office@reffley.norfolk.sch.uk">office@reffley.norfolk.sch.uk</a>

**Appendix 2: Example leave of absence request form.**

<b>APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME</b>			
<b>Important information for parents – please read before completing this form</b>			
<p><a href="#">Working together to improve school attendance</a> advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government ‘does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance’.</p> <p>Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise we will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.</p> <p>Our aim is for every pupil’s attendance to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. If you require any support with ensuring your child’s attendance, please contact [Insert name and contact details].</p>			
<b>I have read the above information and wish to apply for leave of absence from school for:</b>			
<b>Child’s Full Name:</b>	<b>Date of Birth:</b>	<b>Class:</b>	
<b>Parent/Carer Details (please list all parents)</b>			
<b>First Name:</b>		<b>Surname:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>		<b>Relationship to the child:</b>	
<b>Address and postcode:</b>			
<b>Telephone number:</b>			
<b>First Name:</b>		<b>Surname:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>		<b>Relationship to the child:</b>	
<b>Address and postcode:</b>			

<b>Telephone number:</b>	
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**Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings and the school that they attend**

Child's Full Name:	Date of Birth:	School:

**Details of the absence**

<b>Date of First day of absence:</b>		<b>Date of last day of absence:</b>	
<b>Total Number of days absent:</b>		<b>Expected date of return to school:</b>	

**Please provide the reason for this request including supporting evidence:**

**Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:**

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied, and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per parent, per child.

I have read and understood Norfolk County Council's information regarding penalty notices for absence from school and the action they may take.

<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Full name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Full name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

**To be completed by the school:**

<b>Date request received by the school:</b>		<b>Total number of days requested:</b>	
<b>Child's Name:</b>		<b>Application Authorised or Declined?</b>	

<b>Reason for school's decision:</b>				
<b>In the case of a term time holiday please confirm which parent took the holiday:</b>				
<b>Headteacher:</b>				
<b>Signed:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td><b>Date:</b></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		<b>Date:</b>	
	<b>Date:</b>			

### **Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents**

#### **Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents**

The name and contact details of the academy staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

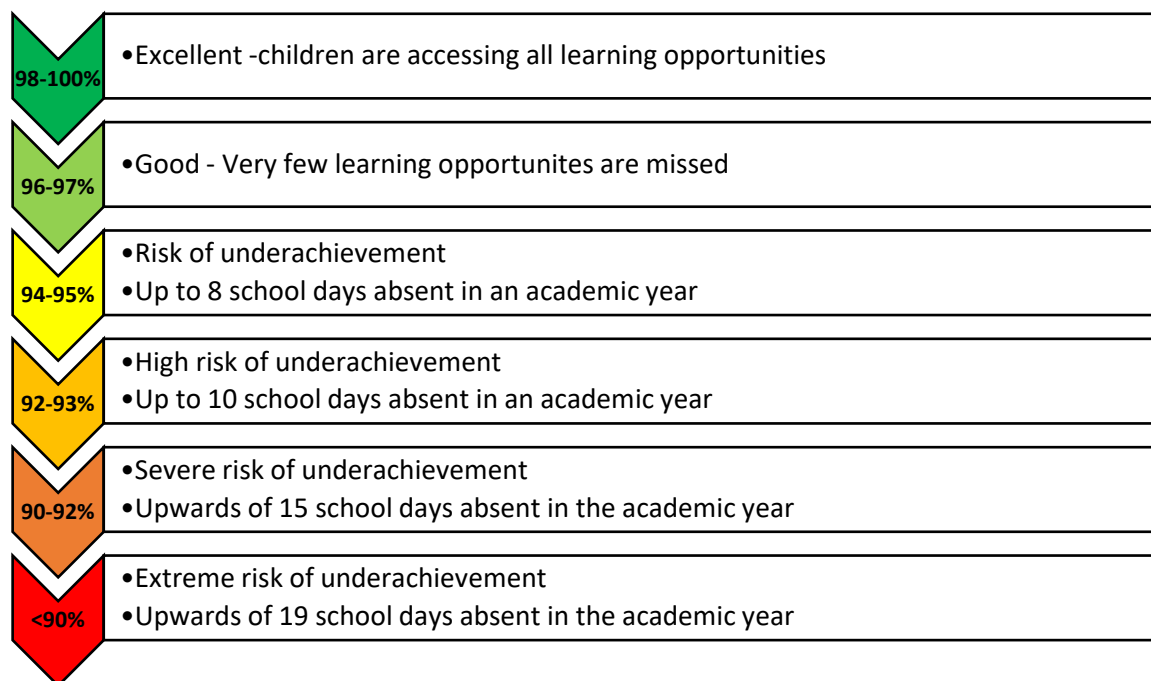
Name:

Email address and telephone number

**We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year. You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:**

- Ensure your child arrives on time at the academy every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the academy of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the academy immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



### **‘On the day’ absences: what should I do if my child is not ‘fit’ to go into school?**

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence by calling the academy office or via Pupil Asset to let us know. In the message you must leave your child’s full name, year group and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Academy	Telephone	Email
Blenheim Park	01485 528368	<a href="mailto:office@blenheimpark.norfolk.sch.uk">office@blenheimpark.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Greenpark Academy	01553 772018	<a href="mailto:office@greenpark.norfolk.sch.uk">office@greenpark.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Reffley Academy	01553 671045	<a href="mailto:office@reffley.norfolk.sch.uk">office@reffley.norfolk.sch.uk</a>

### **Leave of Absence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our ‘Leave of absence request’ form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via the school office. You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

### **Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children’s attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact the academy if you require any support with ensuring your child’s regular school attendance.



#### Appendix 4: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement

<b>B</b>	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
<b>C1</b>	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason

		given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays