



WESTON FAVELL ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

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1. Mission Statement

The Weston Favell Academy is committed to ensuring that all students on its roll are supported to achieve maximum possible attendance. By attending regularly, students can fully benefit from the educational and personal development opportunities provided by the Academy.

2. Aims

To ensure that:

- the Weston Favell Academy fulfils its obligations to provide opportunity for all students of statutory school age on its roll to have equal access to a suitable education with regard to their age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have.
- the Weston Favell Academy fully supports the parents and/or carers of all students on its roll to meet their obligations to secure the education of children of compulsory school age.
- all students should have a minimum attendance rate of 97%.

3. Introduction

The vast majority of students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peers and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

Most children attending the Weston Favell Academy are likely to be absent at some time during their attendance between the ages of 11-19. It is understood that there are sometimes genuine reasons for short term and sporadic non-attendance e.g. genuine illness. Persistent poor attendance, however, is disruptive to the education of the individual, may well impact on the education of others and is sometimes an indication of other welfare issues affecting the child. In all cases the Academy will work with the child, their parents and/or carers and, if necessary, other agencies to ensure that any issues impeding maximum attendance are resolved quickly.

4. Procedures

The attendance procedures put in place at the Academy are aimed at ensuring the welfare of all its students. Parents and carers are asked to help by co-operating with these procedures. Procedures to support student attendance may vary between sites and phases. Details of these procedures are available from the Attendance Officers and are made known to parents and carers via letters home, information booklets and, where necessary, parental meetings.

5. Expectations

Expectations of Students:

- To attend every day
- To arrive on time for all lessons
- To be appropriately prepared for the Academy day
- To inform their tutor/other member of staff of any reason that affects regular attendance.

Expectations of Parents and/or Carers:

- To ensure their child attends the Academy every day
- To ensure that their child attends the Academy on time
- To contact the Academy on the first day of absence of their child and then on any subsequent days of absence
- To contact the Academy in advance to inform the appropriate member of staff if they know of any reason or problem that may affect their child's regular and punctual attendance.

Expectations of the Academy:

- To regularly, efficiently and accurately record attendance
- To make early contact with parents and/or carers when a student is absent where no appropriate reason has been provided
- To promptly take other action as appropriate to resolve issues affecting a student's absence
- To recognise and reward good and improved attendance and punctuality
- To support students access to a suitable education.

6. Recognising Good Attendance and Punctuality

At the Weston Favell Academy we will use a range of measures to praise and reward students who meet their attendance and punctuality targets. This will include achievement assemblies where students will receive recognition and reward for high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality and be entered into prize draws. We will also recognise students who make significant improvements to their attendance or punctuality.

7. Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attends the Academy on time. Students who arrive late to the Academy without good reason will be set a MLT detention. If a student does not attend this detention it will then be escalated to an after school detention for up to an hour.

Our Year Teams will work with parents to overcome barriers which prevent students arriving on time.

Secondary students should arrive on the Academy site by 8.30am every day.

8. Addressing Poor Attendance

At the Weston Favell Academy, we work diligently to help students attend well. We will communicate regularly with parents and always provide support to overcome barriers to good attendance.

If a student's attendance falls below 97%, staff from the relevant Year Team will make home contact and any further absences will be unauthorised unless official documentation is produced. If a student's attendance then falls below 94% parents/carers will be invited to an Attendance Agreement Meeting with the Attendance Officer. At this meeting barriers to good attendance will be discussed, improvement actions agreed and attendance targets set.

If a student's attendance then falls below 91%, parents/carers will be invited to an Education Welfare Officer Meeting. This is the final opportunity to demonstrate an ability to improve attendance before moving towards the prosecution stage.

Any student whose attendance falls below 90% and who fails to meet interim thresholds throughout the year is likely to become a Persistent Absentee (PA). In these cases, further absence due to illness or medical reasons will not be authorised unless supported by additional medical evidence such as a GP appointment card, prescription or letter. Students in this attendance category will be monitored closely by our Education Welfare Officer who will conduct regular home visits and hold meetings with parents. Should there be no improvement in attendance in these cases, we will seek intervention from the Education and Inclusion Partnership Team.

9. Leave of Absence/Unauthorised Holidays During Term Time

The Weston Favell Academy will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion and is **not a parental right**. A leave of absence application must be made in writing at least twelve (12) days in advance by completing a leave of absence request form. The application form is available from the Academy reception.

The Principal must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave.

10. Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

The Weston Favell Academy has adopted the Northampton City Council Code of Conduct in respect of issuing Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays/leave of absence in term time.

The Purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that Penalty Notices are issued consistently and fairly across the Local Authority.

Application for Leave of Absence

Parents have a legal responsibility in accordance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child receives efficient full time education by regular attendance at school. The Department for Education guidance states that holidays and other leave of absence should not be taken during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*.

Exception circumstances are a matter of discretion of the Principal. All cases will be judged on a case by case basis. The Weston Favell Academy may agree a 'leave of absence' in exceptional circumstances such as:

- for military personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside of term time
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

The Principal will not authorise leave of absence **under any circumstances** of more than five (5) days in one academic year. Absence will not be authorised in circumstances such as:

- visits to country of origin to obtain passport/ID card
- absence added on to school holidays in order to extend the period of leave
- adequate notice was not given in advance of the leave of absence or applied for in retrospect
- holidays will not be authorised on the grounds of cost saving or flight booking or distance travelled
- multiple requests for similar circumstances

Leave of absence applications must be made in writing using the appropriate form at least twelve (12) days before the intended leave using the appropriate form.

Use of Penalty Notices

If the Weston Favell Academy refuses an application, or part of it and parents continue to take their child out of school or remain absent beyond the time period granted, the absences will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to a request to the Northampton City Council for them to consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice may also be issued when the level of unauthorised absence is 25% or more over a period of six school weeks. However, shorter timescales may be applied depending on the circumstances of the unauthorised absence.

Where a child resides with two parents a separate penalty notice will be issued to each parent.

The term “parent” used in the code of conduct is defined by Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 2 of the Children Act 1989. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person:

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him/her, or
- (b) who has care of him/her

If a penalty Notice is issued, whether paid or not, it may be used in evidence in subsequent criminal proceedings in relation to non-school attendance.

Effect of a Penalty Notice being issued

The Local Authority will act in accordance with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2012 to issue a Penalty Notice. Penalties are set at £60 if paid within twenty one (21) days rising to £120 if paid after twenty one (21) days but within twenty eight (28) days. If the penalty is paid the absence covered by the Penalty Notice cannot be cited again.

Penalty Notices shall not be issued if legal proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 are under consideration or are in progress.

There is no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice and a parent can either accept and pay the notice or decline payment.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority must either prosecute under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice. Where a penalty notice is withdrawn the recipient will be informed in writing.

If a prosecution is brought and the parent found guilty then a conviction for an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act they may be liable to a fine of up to £1000.