Swinton Academy

ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY POLICY

PHASE	Junior/ Senior
POLICY LEADS	Principal/Associate Principal Senior Leader - Attendance
DATE OF APPROVAL BY TRUSTEES	May 23
DATE OF RECEIPT BY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY	May 23
FREQUENCY DATE	Annually
NEXT REVIEW DATE	May 24

This is the Attendance and Punctuality Policy for (Swinton Academy)

Swinton Academy
East Ave
Swinton
S64 8JW

Name of Attendance and Punctuality Lead – Sandra Moore (Vice Principal)

Swinton Academy MISSION STATEMENT

We have the highest expectations and aspirations at Swinton Academy and we are committed to providing high quality learning and teaching, enabling everyone to reach their full potential, whatever their age, ability, gender or ethnicity.

We believe that every person is a unique member of our diverse and inclusive community, deserving our respect, consideration and acceptance. Everyone's contribution is valued and celebrated.

Through our partnership with the local and wider community, we aim to support all our young people in order that they leave us as successful learners as well as respectful, caring and resilient citizens ready to take up their place in society.

We also expect that all adults recognise their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

"At Swinton Academy, we will make a difference."

CONTENTS - Sections

Section 1: The aims and principles underpinning our Attendance and Punctuality Policy

- Notes to consider:

- The academy has the highest standards and expectations in place for all students.

- The academy will teach and promote the importance of attendance and punctuality to all students and ensure that an ethos of attendance and punctuality excellence is established and shared with all members of its community.

- The academy is committed to maximising the achievement of all students/pupils and recognises the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality as a part of this.

- There   is a clear link between excellent attendance and educational achievement.

- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if students/pupils are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities which are offered to them within the academy.

- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at the academy.

- Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the academy and encouraging students/pupils to reach excellent attendance levels.

- The academy looks to work in partnership with families to ensure that their child's attendance is as regular and punctual as possible. The building of strong relationships with families is a key priority.

- The academy regularly reviews practice and looks to ensure that attendance and punctuality policies and procedures are following effective practice models.

- The academy will work in close partnership with multi-agencies and the Local Authority to ensure that resources are directed swiftly and effectively to students and their families where attendance and/or punctuality is a concern.

- The academy will take appropriate action to promote and encourage excellent attendance.

- Promote and support attendance and punctuality to lessons during the academy day.

- The academy is committed to reducing persistent and severe absence levels and recognises the importance of personalised approaches to supporting attendance and punctuality.

Section 2: Legislation and guidance informing our policy

This policy meets the requirements of the **Working together to improve school attendance** from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on **school attendance parental responsibility measures**. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of **The Education Act 1996**

> Part 3 of **The Education Act 2002**

> Part 7 of **The Education and Inspections Act 2006**

> **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)**

> **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Swinton Academy's Behaviour and Rewards and Safeguarding Policy.

Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities

a) **The Local Governing Body is responsible for:**

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the academy's policies and ethos

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Agreeing Academy attendance targets with the Principal

- Monitoring attendance figures for the academy

- Regularly receiving, reviewing and challenging attendance data

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Supporting the academy in its efforts to improve and raise attendance

- Contributing to plans where attendance is a cause for concern

- Contributing to the academy's strategies to improve attendance e.g. Academy Attendance Panel meetings

- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The governor with responsibility for monitoring, challenging and reviewing attendance is: Carole Crookes

Specific responsibilities linked to this role, includes:

- The above responsibilities linked to attendance.

- Termly meeting with Swinton Academy attendance leads.

- Reviewing attendance data and discussing progress on attendance with academy leadership team, with the use of 'challenge' questions.

- Access appropriate and timely attendance CPD, including courses.

- Feedback to LGB at least termly.

b) **The Principal/Associate Principal is responsible for:**

- The Implementation of our Attendance and Punctuality Policy

- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and in line with Local Authority procedures

c) **The designated Senior Leader with overall responsibility for attendance should:**

- Develop, monitor and regularly review the Attendance and Punctuality Policy in collaboration with the Principal
- Lead attendance across the academy
- Have a clear ethos, vision and strategy for improving academy attendance and communicate this effectively with staff, governors and parents/carers
- Produce and distribute attendance information for parents/carers
- Ensure programmes are in place to educate students/pupils about the importance of punctuality and attendance
- Set and monitor targets for improving attendance within the academy
- Support all staff in their work related to attendance
- Meet with year teams to regularly discuss attendance patterns and students/pupils causing concern (Intervention strategies will be planned, implemented and reviewed)
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Ensure that attendance data is collected effectively and patterns and trends are used to inform timely intervention for individuals and cohorts of students
- Collate attendance data for the DfE, Local Authority and the Local Governing Body and in liaison with colleagues
- Report students missing in education (CME) following academy and local authority procedures
- Report to the local authority any students where written notification of Home Education has been requested
- Liaise with multi agencies and the Local Authority regarding attendance targets and the Academy Strategy
- Identify individual students with known punctuality/attendance concerns and ensuring these students are monitored closely using SIMS data.
- Supporting the role/s of the attendance team and using academy resources efficiently and effectively
- Identify those students/pupils whose attendance is falling below average and work with parents/carers towards improvement
- Liaising with the Local Authority and relevant multi-agencies regarding students/pupils whose attendance is giving significant cause for concern
- Liaising with other partner agencies and services towards improving and developing strategies to raise levels of attendance where relevant
- Rewarding outstanding / improving attendance
- Liaising with relevant colleagues regarding Attendance Support Plans (ASPs) and their implementation for students with specific medical needs

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sandra Moore and can be contacted via e-mail at smoore@swintonacademy.org

d) The Academy Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

- The attendance officer is Louise Cawkwell and can be contacted via e-mail at lcawkwell@swinontacademy.org

e) The Academy Attendance Support Team is responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system (SIMS etc.)

- Transferring calls from parents/carers to the appropriate year teams in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

- Notifying parents/carers of their child's absence via the parent information system (including e-mail and text), where no message or call has been received by (10.30am). Where this generates no response, contact will be made with our academy EWO to initiate a home visit.

- Entering Information received regarding attendance onto the SIMS system.

- Notifying year teams of absences in line with attendance procedures.

- Providing administrative support in logging, tracking and communicating individual and collective attendance levels and patterns.

f) Form Tutors and Class/Subject Teachers should:

- Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office within 10mins of the session beginning.

Form Tutors
- Complete registers promptly and accurately at the start of registration - electronically
- Have regular discussions with students about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality – daily Tutor Time.
- Liaise with the year team and attendance officer regarding any queries surrounding absence.

Subject Teachers – Secondary
- Subject teachers must register students every period and follow up unauthorised absence from that period as truancy.
- Staff should mark registers every lesson on the electronic system within the first ten minutes of the lesson so that post-registration truancy can be checked. If this is not possible a paper copy of the register must be taken and sent to the attendance office.
- Students arriving after the register has been taken should have their absence mark amended. A late mark should be recorded, where appropriate.

g) Education Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring/improving attendance of target groups in collaboration with the Senior Attendance Lead, Principal and Attendance Teams.

- Conducts visits/writes letters/caseworks and liaises with other agencies linked to students/pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Attends Case Conferences, TAF meetings and or other/directed professionals' meetings on behalf of the academy/trust/LA.
- Attends weekly/fortnightly attendance/liaison meetings with senior leader with responsibility for attendance.
- Liaising with the Local Authority Attendance Teams regarding case-loads and prepares any relevant documentation.
- Producing statistics/information for specified meetings.
- Assisting parents/carers with academy transfers and may give advice regarding parent/carer requests for support to multi-agencies/welfare and benefits procedures.
- Working closely with senior leaders to review attendance systems and procedures.
- Maintaining a high profile for attendance across the academy.
- Supports with assemblies/home visits and meetings to promote the importance of punctuality.
- Completes Child Missing in Education documentation in line with statutory and Local Authority guidance.

Section 4: Academy Expectations

We expect our students/pupils:

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day.
- To report to attendance office and sign in should they arrive after 9am.
- To inform Swinton Academy of any reason that will prevent them from attending the academy.

We expect parents/carers of our students to work with us to ensure:

- Parents/carers are fulfilling their responsibility by ensuring their children attend the academy regularly and on time.
- Parents/carers contact the academy every day that their child is unable to attend (by 8.30am on the day of absence).
- Their child arrives on time and is well-prepared for the school day (correct uniform, school bag and necessary equipment)
- Parents/carers contact the academy whenever any problem arises that may lead to their child's absence/keep their child away from the academy.
- The academy is informed and authorisation sought for any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, appointments are arranged outside of academy day.
- The continuity of their children's education by taking holidays during the academy holiday period.
- Parents/carers can be easily contacted by providing more than one contact number.

What students and parents/carers can expect of the academy:
- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at the academy.
- The encouragement and promotion of excellent attendance.

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Contact with parents/carers on a daily basis when a student does not attend.
- *Prompt action taken if any problems are identified that prevent a child attending the academy/*Prompt action taken linked to any problems brought to a member of staff's attention.
- Close liaison with the Early Help Team to assist and support parents/carers, students and their families where needed.
- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through regular reports, and letters home.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1)
- When a student is absent and contact cannot be made by telephone, a standard letter will be sent and a home visit will/may take place.
- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day. Electronic registration takes place at the start of the morning session (8.40am – 8.50am) and once in the afternoon session (1pm – 1.10pm) using SIMS. (Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'School Attendance' published November 2018 by the DfE).
- Registers close at 9.10am and 2pm, after which students/pupils will be marked with the unauthorised absence (U code).
- Where the academy's procedures and contact with home have failed to bring about improvement and poor attendance persists, the academy will request that parent/carers attend meetings within the academy with members of the year team, academy EWO and leadership team, when appropriate. Where a student's/pupil's attendance does not improve when placed on an 'Attendance Plan' (AP) a meeting will take place with the Academy's Attendance Panel and the relevant communication and referrals will be made to Rotherham Local Authority who will liaise with academy staff to provide further attendance support.
- The academy and year group attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored. The academy will respond to any areas of concern identified.
- Through partnership working with Early Help and the Local Authority, further action may be taken in the form of a penalty notice should concerns regarding a child's attendance persist despite the academy's procedures being followed (see Appendix 2).

Section 5: Recording attendance

1. The Attendance Register

We keep attendance registers for all taught contact periods during the academy day. AM and PM attendance registers take place.
Attendance registers mark whether students/pupils are:
- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry

- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

<mark>See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.</mark>

We will also record:

- (For students/pupils of compulsory school age) Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a student/pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student/pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students/Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9 10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm

2. **Unplanned Absence**

- The student's/pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by <mark>(8.30am)</mark> or as soon as practically possible by calling the school (admin/office) staff (see also section 8).
- <mark>The academy can be contacted on</mark> 01709 570586 and then select the option to leave an student absence message.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's/pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3. **Planned Absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's/pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Please contact the academy and follow Leave of Absence procedures (<mark>Section 6</mark>) where making a request for absence during term time.

- The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4. Lateness and punctuality

A student/pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the U code

The academy actively discourages late arrival, monitors and tracks patterns of late arrival and will contact parents/carers to identify why students are arriving late and prevent late arrival moving forwards.

Staff actively encourage punctuality to the academy each morning and to lessons. Students/Pupils arriving late disrupt the continuity of learning for others as well as themselves.

A firm line is taken on late arrival. When students/pupils arrive late without adequate explanation a record of the time of arrival is kept.

Attendance marks are tracked daily. Our Education Welfare Officer greets students each morning that arrive late to the academy and a text message is sent informing parents/carers of their child's late arrival. Students that are late persistently and without legitimate reason are sanctioned to detention time at break to make up for lost learning time and liaison takes place with parents/carers to out a punctuality plan in place. Students are placed on punctuality reports which are shown daily to the EWO and Pastoral Leaders.

Persistent lateness may provide grounds for prosecution and parents will be informed of this. The Education Welfare Officer/ attendance officer will notify parents/carers if students/pupils develop a pattern of lateness.

5. Unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend the academy does not attend, or stops attending, the academy will:

- Make contact with the student's parents/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the academy may need to seek support from external agencies including the Police, Social Care and/or Early Help.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper and appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the academy will see the support of the Education Welfare Officer.

- In senior academies the EWO will visit on day 1 of absence for all students where contact has not been made. Where contact has been made but students are vulnerable (CP, CIN - safeguarding concerns) visits will still take place on day 1. Where contact has been made and students are not identified as vulnerable, visits will take place within 5 days if students do not return to the academy within that time frame.

6. Reporting to parents/carers

- The academy will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via school monitoring and reporting systems.
- If parents/carers have any questions about their child's attendance and/or punctuality record, they should contact their child's year team leaders

Section 6: Authorised and unauthorised absence

1. Approval for term-time absence

- The Principal/Associate Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a student/pupil during term time if they consider there to be **'exceptional circumstances'**. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's/Associate Principal's discretion, including the length of time authorised linked to the absence request.

  We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events that are unavoidable and could include (non-exhaustive list):

  1. funerals or weddings of <u>immediate</u> family members
  2. to visit a terminally ill relative
  3. forces staff returning from abroad
  4. parents returning from having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period
  5. compassionate leave
  6. performance at representative level (County/National) with accompanying letter from the relevant body

  Please note: Parent/carer employment holiday rotas and differences in the financial costs of holidays in term time compared to designated school holiday periods, are not exceptional circumstances and holidays will <u>not</u> be authorised linked to these reasons.

- Children have to attend school for 190 days per academic year. This leaves 175 days (including weekends) free for families to take holidays.

- The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

- The Principal will determine the number of academy days a child can be away from academy if the leave is granted. (For example, a maximum of two days or equivalent in each academic year will be awarded for students taking part in

pursuits not linked directly to the academy e.g. National sports representation).

- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form (Appendix 2), accessible via the academy website (www.swintonacademy.org): under the parent/carer tab – titled leave of absence and holidays. The Principal/Associate Principal may require evidence to support and request for leave of absence.

- Parents/carers who remove their children from the academy without authorisation or do not return their child to the academy on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning (FPN) which could lead to a fine/prosecution.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for further details)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's/pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice form the student's/pupil's religious body to confirm if the day is set apart.

- Traveller students/pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish travellers, fairground workers, circus people, occupational boat dwellers and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the student/pupil is attending educational provision.

- Swinton Academy does not usually run study leave for students in preparation for external summer exams. Arrangements will be made for students to continue to attend lessons, revision sessions and supervised support during the exam season up to the official leaving date for that cohort.

- Students/Pupils leaving the premises during the morning or afternoon session may only do so legitimately if they have parental permission expressed as a request to the academy or a member of staff has made arrangements with a parent/carer. They should be issued with a Leave of Absence slip/note and should sign out at Reception. If the reason for leaving is to attend an appointment, it is important that they bring the actual appointment card especially if the student is an irregular attender. For health and safety reasons parents/carers are required to collect students/pupils from Reception. Students/Pupils should sign out and sign back in if they return on the same day.

2. **Legal sanctions**

The academy or Local Authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60.00 within 21 days or £120.00 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal/Associate Principal, Local Authority or the Police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within an academic year
- One off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken within term time without permission

- Where an excluded student/pupil is found in a public place during academy hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice

https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/education-2/school-attendance

https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/documents/s116436/Appendix%202%20-%20FPN%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf

https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/documents/s116435/Appendix%201%20-%20FPN%20Code%20of%20Conduct-%20updated%20April%2016.pdf

DfE guidance issued in May 2022 – 'Working together to improve school attendance', clearly shows the responsibilities of academies, parents/carers, Local Authorities and agencies in ensuring that students/pupils attend school.

- Page 8 shows how all partners should work together to: EXPECT, MONITOR, LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND, FACILITATE SUPPORT, FORMALISE SUPPORT and ENFORCE.

- Page 33 discusses effective school attendance improvement and management and indicates the importance of prevention, early and targeted intervention. Ultimately all adults working with children have a responsibility to ensure that they work together to enable all young people to attend school.

- Page 34 shows how support may range voluntary to formal support and how if attendance does not improve, action will involve statutory children's social care involvement moving to attendance prosecution if there is no improvement over time with support.

We are committed to proactive attendance intervention that enables our families to feel supported and break down the barriers that may impact upon their children attending the academy. However, we will use every possible means of ensuring that our young people attend our academy and receive an education, as is their legal entitlement.

Section 7: Strategies for promoting excellent attendance and punctuality at _____ Academy

We promote excellent attendance and punctuality as a high priority and seek to celebrate outstanding/improving attendance/punctuality.

- Attendance and punctuality and their importance is very high profile at our academy and students/pupils are taught about the impact of their attendance and punctuality on their learning.
- Attendance figures are shared in assemblies.
- Certificates are awarded for 100% attendance, improved attendance and 100% weekly attendance..
- Excellent attendance is celebrated at the annual Oscars and ACET Awards events.
- Recognition is made of improving attendance for individuals/groups of students/pupils.
- Excellent/improving attendance is shared with parents/carers through telephone message, student rewards, e-mails.
- Attendance figures are recorded on the monitoring reports sent to parents/carers and excellence / improvement is praised by year teams.
- Attendance and punctuality rewards include activities to take part in each half term, rewards in assembly, larger end of academic year rewards.
- Attendance and punctuality is promoted during form/tutor time by weekly attendance stickers, student conversations, data being shared with students.
- Information is sent to parents/carers about the importance of attendance.

Please include any personalised ways that attendance/punctuality is promoted within your academy and across your community.

Section 8: Attendance monitoring

1. Attendance monitoring

At Swinton Academy we monitor attendance data daily, weekly and half termly. We look at percentage attendance and sessions absent rates and compare our attendance levels with national and regional statistics. We carefully monitor and track the attendance of all students/pupils individually and key cohorts including, year groups, gender groups, SEND, disadvantaged, LAC and EAL.

Our academy attendance target is rightly ambitious at 96%. Children with attendance at 96% or above are more likely to achieve in line with their targets and above peers that have lower attendance levels.

We look closely at student attendance and ensure that:

- Students with attendance between 93-96% are supported by tutor and year team.
- Students with attendance between 90-93% are supported by EWO and year team.
- Persistent absence students (attendance below 90%) are supported by by EWO, year team and early help if necessary.
- Students categorised as 'severely absent' (attendance below 50%) are supported by EWO, year team, senior leaders, early help.

Close monitoring and enhanced support are put in place for particular students/groups of students whose absence is a cause for concern.

Student level absence data is collected each term externally and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The academy compares attendance data to the national average using FFTd weekly data checks and shares this five times each year with the Local Governing Body.

2. Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students/pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students/pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

3. Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to (class teachers, form/group tutors, HoY, Pastoral Leaders, Learning Progress Managers) to facilitate discussion with students/pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

4. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student/pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student/pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Regularly communicate with the parents/carers of students/pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. Dependent upon the level of attendance concern, different verbal/written communication will be had with/sent to parents/carers indicating the next stages of support and intervention.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students/pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement in school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove attendance barriers.

Our academy cares about your children and their educational and wider success. If we did not have this level of care and high expectations for them, we would not invest time, energy and resources in working with all of our students/pupils and their families where attendance needs to improve. It is important that this is kept in mind when communicating with the academy about your child's attendance levels. Judgements are not being made about how attendance levels have become a cause for concern but a firm focus is placed on improving attendance levels for all students where their attendance may impact on their learning and wider success. It is important that professionals, parents/carers and all supporting adults work together to remove attendance barriers.

It is vitally important that parents/carers are actively engaged in promoting good attendance. The academy will keep parents/carers informed on issues surrounding attendance and punctuality through the academy prospectus, website details, newsletters, electronic, written and verbal communication and monitoring reports. The academy will react as swiftly and effectively as possible to any parent/carer concerns. Parents/carers will be encouraged to make contact with the academy to discuss any issues impacting on their children's attendance. A child of compulsory academy age who is registered at an academy must attend regularly. In law parents/carers have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

Section 9: Working in partnership with the Local Authority and professional agencies

Our Local Authority Attendance Team is Rotherham.

Close work and communication between Rotherham schools, the Local Authority, and families when school attendance is an issue. The School Attendance Matters Pathway requires school to offer support through the Early Help Assessment and send a series of letters to parents if attendance does not improve. Enforcement will only happen in Rotherham if the School Attendance Matters Pathway has been followed appropriately. If parents and carers refuse support the School Attendance Matters Pathway must still be followed.

We work in partnership through Rotherham Local Authority.

Rotherham Local Authority Attendance Guidance can be found at https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/education-2/school-attendance

We work together with Early Help Teams to improve the attendance of our persistent and severe absence students.

We work together with Social Care to ensure students are safe and regularly attending school.

Section 10: Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. The policy will be updated at an academy and trust level annually.

This policy will be reviewed by the trust attendance lead Dominic Curran.
At each review, the policy will be approved by the Swinton Academy Local Governing Body.

Section 11: Links with other policies at Swinton Academy

This policy links to the following policies:

Swinton Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Swinton Academy Behaviour and Rewards Policy
ACET Supporting students with medical needs
ACET Medicines in the academy
ACET Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Updated DfE guidance – May 2022

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSE
/	Present (AM)	Present	
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Off-site educational activity	Approved educational activity	Counted as physically present
C	Leave of absence authorised by the academy	Authorised absence	
D	Dual registered – at another educational establishment	Not counted in possible attendance	
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	
G	Family holiday (NOT authorised by the academy or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	
H	Family holiday authorised by the academy	Authorised absence under exceptional circumstances	
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments)	Authorised absence *In line with transition to 'Living with Covid-19' and the latest public health guidance, code I should be used for those students/pupils who have Covid-related symptoms or have a positive test result.	
J	Interview	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present

L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised appointments	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	
P	Approved supervised sporting activity	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence	
U	Late arrival (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
W	Work experience	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (enforced closure)	Not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not yet on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendances	

Leave of Absence Request

(Including holidays in term time)

A child can now only be granted leave of absence during term time for exceptional reasons.

The Principal does not have to give permission if you request a holiday. If the holiday is not approved, your child's absence will be recorded as <mark>unauthorised.</mark>

Exceptional Circumstances include:

- **funerals or weddings of immediate family members**
- **to visit a terminally ill relative**
- **forces staff returning from abroad**
- **parents returning from having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period**
- **compassionate leave**
- **performance at representative level (County/National) with accompanying letter- from the relevant body**

How do I make a request for Leave of Absence?

- Complete the leave of absence request form on the next page.

- Detach the form and hand it in to the school reception (at least 14 days before the first day of your requested absence)

- If you consider the circumstances to be **exceptional** attach a letter addressed to the Principal explaining the circumstances of the request.

- You will be notified in writing informing you of the decision.

- Please note that unless circumstances are judged to be exceptional, the leave of absence will be declined.

"Taking your child out of school during term time will result in missed learning opportunities. National studies have shown that there is a strong link between school attendance and attainment."

Should I still fill in a form if I know the request will be unauthorised?

YES

We contact parents/ carers on a daily basis if we do not know the reason for absence of a student. It is very important you let us know why your child is absent even if the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

In deciding if the absence is EXCEPTIONAL, the Principal will consider the following:

◊ Is the absence within the control of the parent/ carer?

(A letter, on headed paper, from an employer is required if the absence is due to the availability of leave)

◊ Does the student have a good attendance record?

◊ Will the absence have a negative impact on the attainment of the student?

◊ Is the activity a worthwhile experience which will enrich the student's broader education?

(our guidance is for two days maximum (or equivalent) in each academic year for such activities)

**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL
DURING TERM TIME**

If you consider you have to take your child out of school in term time, please complete this form and return to the school at least 28 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.
Please read the reverse of this form carefully prior to its completion.

Student/Pupil Name .... **Tutor Group**..............

Home Address ....

First day of absence ....**Date of return to the academy** ....

Total number of days missed ....

Reasons for absence (please attach a letter if you require additional space)
....
....
....
....
....

I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Education Welfare Officer will be notified.
I understand that a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued. From September 2013 these are £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. This rises to £120.00 after 21 days.

Name of Parent/Carer making application ....

Signed .... **Date** ....
(Please ensure you are giving at least 28 days' notice of the proposed absence)

Please return to the academy reception. Remember to include any supporting information

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For official use only

¨ **AUTHORISED:**   For the following dates:

          ____/____/____to_____/____/ ____

¨ **UNAUTHORISED:**   Reason:

Decision taken by _____

Leave of absence in term time – Local Authority guidance for the consideration of parents/carers

1   The decision to grant the request is for the school, not the Authority or the parent/carer. Only schools can authorise absences.
2   There is no requirement to authorise because a request has been made.
3   The Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) gives the Local Authority the power to issue fixed penalty notices for unauthorised leave of absence during term time.
4   No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right.
5   Any request for leave must be made in advance.
6   Holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.
7   If the application for leave of absence in term time is made because of the parents'/carers' workplace holiday arrangements, then a letter from the employer/s explaining why the leave of absence must be taken in term time SHOULD be attached to this form on letter-headed paper.
8   If important work has been missed by the student due to parents/carers making a request for leave of absence for a holiday, parents/carers should not expect special arrangements to be made by the school for that student to catch up work.
9   The circumstances of each individual request will be taken into account. The following factors may be relevant but this should not be regarded as a comprehensive list:

- The overall attendance of the child for the previous academic year or 3 terms.
- If taking leave of absence in the first half of the first term would have a negative impact on student progress.
- If a previous holiday has been taken in the same academic year.
- Timing of internal and/or external examinations/assessments.
- The reason given by a parent for requesting leave of absence in term time.

If you have any questions regarding how Leave of Absence decisions are made, please don't hesitate to contact us in school. Your first line of contact should be your child's year manager.

Below is an extract from the 'Frequently Asked Questions' section of the Department for Education publication: School attendance, published in 2018

Can a parent take their child on holiday during term time?

Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

'School attendance parental responsibility measures', DfE update 2017.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.