



**A C A D E M Y  
G R E A T B A R R**

# Attendance Policy

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<b>Ratified by:</b>	Local Governing Body
<b>Review Date:</b>	December 2022
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	December 2023

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## Policy statement and principles

Q3 Academy Great Barr believes that regular attendance is a key factor in the drive to raise standards of attainment and enhance the learning opportunities of all students. Poor attendance and punctuality is recognised as a key factor in underachievement and disaffection. It is the duty of all parents/carers to actively promote and encourage excellent attendance and punctuality with their children.

Students are expected to attend the Academy every day. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children who are registered at Q3 Academy Great Barr attend regularly and punctually. The Academy will endeavour to support parents/carers and students in this.

We are committed to:

- ✓ Promoting excellent attendance and reducing absence;
- ✓ Ensuring full time education for every student;
- ✓ Acting immediately to address patterns of absence and poor punctuality.

Advice and guidance is taken from the [DfE Working together to improve school attendance May 2022](#) and [DfE Children Missing Education September 2016](#)

## Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually to take account of:

- ✓ Changes in legislation and/ government guidance;
- ✓ Any other significant change or event;
- ✓ The policy being determined ineffective.

If there are any concerns these should be raised with the Attendance Team in the first instance.

The Local Governing Body will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented within the Academy.

## Key principles

Q3 Academy Great Barr is required to keep regular and accurate records of each student's attendance and report this to the DfE. The Education Act (1996 and 2002) requires parents/carers to ensure that their child/children attend the Academy on a regular basis. Non-compliance may result in legal action against parents/carers.

We take attendance and its link to attainment very seriously at Q3 Academy Great Barr and expect all students to be reaching an attendance of 97%.

## Definitions

A student is classed as absent if they arrive at the Academy after the register has closed or if they do not attend for any reason. Every half day absence from the Academy has to be classified by the Academy (not by parents/carers), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of the absence is required, preferably in writing.

An authorised absence means that the Academy has either given approval in advance for a student to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence:

- ✓ Dual Registered - at another educational establishment;
- ✓ At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment;
- ✓ Where a child is participating in a supervised and approved sporting event;

- ✓ Work experience;
- ✓ Illness unless there is a genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. The absence can be supported by medical evidence;
- ✓ Medical or orthodontist dental appointments which fall unavoidably during the Academy day. The student should only be out of the Academy for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Routine medical and dental appointments should be made out of the Academy hours;
- ✓ Religious observance for which the Academy has granted leave (one day);
- ✓ An absence due to exceptional circumstances

An unauthorised absence is defined as:

- ✓ Parents/carers keeping children from attending the Academy unnecessarily or without reason;
- ✓ Absences which have not been explained;
- ✓ Arrival at the Academy after the register has closed;
- ✓ Day trips and holidays during term time which have not been authorised;
- ✓ Shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays.

Whilst any child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the Academy. There are systems in place within the Academy to support students to manage their illness, for example, in relation to Wellbeing Active lessons. Any issues with regular attendance are best discussed between the Academy, the parents/carers, and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is essential not to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance is not important and usually makes any issues worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) is defined as missing 10% or more (90% or less attendance) of education across each term during the academic year for whatever reason.

### **Absence procedures**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Academy of a student absence and also to inform us of any changes to contact details. The Academy needs to hold an emergency contact number for two or more persons. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent/carer.

Parents/carers are asked to contact the Academy before 08:30am on **EACH** day that their child is absent, informing us of a reason for the absence and when their child will be returning to the Academy.

Failure to inform the Academy of an absence will result in an 'absence text message' being sent, followed by a telephone call and home visit if necessary.

### **Appointments**

Routine medical and dental appointments should be made outside of the Academy day where possible. Where this is not possible a note and appointment card should be sent in to the Academy prior to the appointment. Students must attend the Academy before and after the appointment where possible. If the appointment requires the student to leave during the day, they must be collected by an adult listed as an approved contact for a child. Where possible, students should come into the Academy to get their attendance mark before going to their appointment.

In the instance of a student arriving late to the Academy following an appointment, they should report to the Attendance Office where a member of the attendance team will provide them with an attendance slip. The student should then give this to their teacher to confirm that they have been registered in the Academy.

## **Religious observations**

Parents/carers must inform the Academy in advance if absence is required for a day of religious observance.

## **Term time leave**

We require parents/carers to observe the term times of the Academy. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. The Headteacher will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from the Academy. The Headteacher does not have the discretion to authorise holidays during termtime.

Any requests for leave during term time must be made at least five days in advance. A leave of absence form must be requested from the Academy, completed in full, and returned to the Academy.

## **Intervention**

Q3 Academy Great Barr recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year. Certain groups of students may be more at risk of poor attendance and the Academy will provide support and assistance wherever possible.

Unannounced home visits will be conducted by the Academy Attendance and Welfare Team in cases of absence.

When a student's attendance decreases to below 97%, a concerns letter will be issued outlining the support that is available to ensure good attendance. If no improvement is made, a medical evidence request will be issued. Should attendance continue to decline, parents/carers will be invited into the Academy for a meeting to discuss further.

## **Students with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities**

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other student. Therefore, the attendance ambition for these students will be the same as they are for any other student. That said, in working with their parents/carers to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these students face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Students with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the Local Authority. Local Authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory education age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

In all cases, the Academy staff will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising students and parents/carers. We will talk to students and parents/carers to try to understand how they feel, and what they think would help improve their attendance. This will include developing an individual approach that meets a student's specific needs.

## **Persistent Absentee**

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents/carers to meet with or speak to a member of the Attendance Team and the student's Head of Year. If attendance decreases further a referral could be submitted to the Local Authority Attendance and Prosecution Service for further action. Once referred to the Attendance and Prosecution Service they will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.

## **Punctuality**

Any students arriving after 08:45 will be classed as late and sanctioned accordingly.

## **Children Missing Education**

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Knowing where children are during the Academy day is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always follow up with parents/carers when students are not at the Academy. This means we need to have a least two up-to-date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents/carers should remember to update the Academy as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2022\)](#) the Academy has:

- ✓ Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly;
- ✓ Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for students who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions);
- ✓ Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM, and forced marriage.
- ✓ Procedures to inform the Local Authority when we plan to take students off-roll when they:
  - leave the Academy to be home educated;
  - move away from the Academy's location;
  - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory education age;
  - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to the Academy afterwards); or
  - are permanently excluded.

We will ensure that students who are expected to attend the Academy, but fail to take up the place, will be referred to the Local Authority.

When a student leaves the Academy, we will record the name of the student's new educational establishment, and their expected start date.

If a member of staff suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, they should follow the Academy's child protection procedures. If necessary we will make an immediate referral to the relevant authorities.