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**Paignton Community & Sports Academy**

**SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES**



**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Updated Policy - June 2014

**Statement of Intent**

Paignton Community & Sports Academy aims to work together with parents/carers to ensure the achievement of high levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils; this is with the intention of enabling all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

There are clearly documented links between regular attendance and attainment; the Academy closely monitors pupil’s attendance both in registration and in class.

The Academy encourages parents/carers to assist and support the school in its work to maintaining high levels of attendance throughout the Academy by:

* Ensuring the regular attendance of their son/daughter.
* Informing the Academy when their son/daughter is absent from school and the reason for their absence.
* Attend any meetings, if necessary, arranged concerning their son/daughter’s attendance.

**Aims**

The Academy sets attendance targets in line with the Department of Education (DfE) guidelines which aims to improve attendance, reduce unauthorised absences and reduce the number of persistent absentees (students with attendance below 85%).

The Academy aims to:

* Have clear, relevant guidelines for register keeping which are carefully and routinely carried out by staff.
* Ensure that good attendance has a high priority with pupils, parents and Academy staff.
* Demonstrate clearly stated procedures for follow-up when there is a concern about an absence.
* Understand the action that can be taken by the Local Authority’s Attendance Improvement Service to ensure good attendance.

**Rights, Responsibilities and Roles of the Academy, including Governors:**

*The Academy:*

All staff to be made aware that it is a statutory obligation to keep accurate records of all students’ attendance and punctuality; Form Tutors will register all students using electronic registration during am and pm registration. All electronic registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session using Lesson Monitor and saved prior to the start of lessons. Lesson Monitor is used to check on truancy both internally and externally.

Staff to be made aware that they have a professional obligation to keep accurate attendance records to incomplete or inaccurate registers is unacceptable; they provide a daily record of attendance which may be required in a Court of Law.

The school will ensure that attendance information is regularly communicated to parents through a range of correspondences including the school’s website (including Learning Gateway which is accessible through the website), newsletters, school prospectus, school reports and parents meetings/evenings. The school will inform parents termly of their son/daughter’s attendance figure and annually of whole school attendance via the school newsletter.

The school will accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness.

The school will have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness, allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities.

The school will annually review its attendance policy and associated procedures.

*Governors:*

The Governing Body have a responsibility for monitoring school attendance and should be familiar with the current legislation; be clear about the procedures for monitoring of attendance in the school. Regular reports on attendance will be closely monitored by the Governing Body and the policy evaluated. Members of the Governing Body may work with the Pastoral Support Team and Attendance Personnel to promote good attendance.

**Rights, Responsibilities and Roles of Parents/Carers and Pupils:**

*Parents/Carers:*

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends the school at which they are registered. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority taking legal action.

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

Parents/Carers are responsible for immediately informing school of the reason for any absence by phone call on the first morning of any absence and **each day** thereafter.

Parents/Carers should **not** take their child out of school during term time and are to be made aware of the potential consequences of a Penalty Notice being issued or subsequent prosecution of doing so without the school’s prior written permission.

*Pupils:*

Every student should aim to have 100% attendance; if a pupil is late for registration they should report to the Attendance Office upon arrival to ensure that they have a registration mark. Pupils arriving to school late will be required to attend a detention at break time the same day; this sanction is in place to encourage students to arrive to school on time.

Pupils should bring a letter to explain any absences and hand them to their Form Tutor/Pastoral Team/Attendance Office upon their return. Pupils should **NOT** leavethe Academy premises during the school day without permission or without signing out at the Attendance Office with a letter explaining the reason for leaving. **Pupils are reminded that they are NOT to use their own mobile telephones to contact home/parents if they want to leave during the school day; Academy staff will make direct contact as it is essential that permission is given via a member of staff.**

**Registering of Pupils:**

By Law the Academy is required to complete an attendance register twice a day, once at the beginning of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session to confirm whether a pupil is present, absent, engaged in an approved off-site educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

All students are registered using electronic registration (Lesson Monitor); registration takes place in tutor groups. Teaching staff are also required to complete an electronic registration at the start of every lessons and have ‘saved’ before the lesson commences. Staff taking registers are required to amend any incorrections as soon as possible or notify the Attendance Officer. Staff are not to ‘correct’ any mark that has been entered in advance by the Attendance Officer.

**Lateness:**

Research shows that there are two negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late. These are:

* The loss of education suffered by the pupil which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time at school
* The disruption to other students in their class as the teacher’s attention is taken from the task at hand

Students that arrive late to form registration (after registers have closed at 8.40am) will be required to complete a same day detention for 10 minutes at break time, failure to attend will see the detention carried over to the following day at break time for 20 minutes. Failure to complete either of the break time detentions will see the sanction moved to a Lunchtime detention with Academy Senior Management for 30 minutes. This is a sanction that has been put in place to encourage students in having good punctuality.

Students who arrive late (after 9.00am) will be marked a U code (unauthorised mark); this will also be recorded as a visit to the Behaviour Centre for extreme lateness and the above sanctions will also be implemented.

**Authorised/Unauthorised Absence:**

All absences must be explained by a parent; the school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Acceptable reasons for the authorisation of absences are:

* Illness (1)
* Exceptional family circumstances such as a bereavement
* Days of religious observance
* Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (2) – The Academy would expect medical and dental appointments to be after 3pm in majority of cases.

1. **Illness:**

Medical evidence may be requested where a child has been absent for more than 4 school days due to illness OR where a child’s attendance is below 90% and/or is regularly away from school due to illness. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being unauthorised.

1. **Unavoidable Medical/Dental Appointments:**

All routine (non-emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of school hours. Should a pupil need to have an appointment during school hours, evidence of this appointment will need to be provided. Failure to provide evidence may result in the school unauthorising the absence. We would like to encourage parents NOT to take their son/daughter out of school for a WHOLE day for a medical/dental appointment.

**Term Time Leave of Absence**

As of the **1st September 2013 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force.** These amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The amendments make clear that the Academy Principal or Academy representative may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Principal should determine the number of school days a child can be away from the school if the leave is granted.

*Requesting the absence:*

All requests for a child to be absent from school during term time must be made in writing at least two weeks in advance of the proposed absence by completing the Leave of Absence Request Form obtainable from the Attendance Office.

The Principal or person with delegated responsibility will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, on a case by case basis, and will only do so where there are **exceptional circumstances.**

Where a decision is made not to authorise a request for leave of absence, the Academy will write to the parent/carer notifying them of that decision. Parents do not have the right to appeal to any decisions made by the Academy.

The school may request the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice to the parents/carers for the unauthorised absence.

**Permission will not be granted if the proposed absence takes place during any examination period.**

*Absences will not be granted in the following circumstances/If no absence request is made in the required time for:*

If a child is absent from school during term time and no prior absence request has been made, the school will write to parents/carers to inform then that the absence has not been authorised and that a penalty notice may be issued.

If the parents/carers can demonstrate that the child’s absence during term time was due to **exceptional circumstance** and that an absence request could not have been made in advance of the said absence, then a penalty notice will not be issued.

**Please be aware:**

***Parents/carers who take their child out of school without prior written authorisation from the school may be subject to a £60 penalty notice per child, per parent from the Local Authority.***

***Parents/carers must, from September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.***

*Non-payment of the penalty within those timescales may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court under s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.*

Absences that will **not** be authorised are:

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| * Holidays not agreed | * Birthdays |
| * Shopping | * Tiredness due to previous day’s activities |
| * Looking after family members | * Concerts/Festivals |
| * Visiting relatives | * Non-essential medical or dental appointments |

**Improving School Attendance:**

The Academy has a range of strategies available to support parents/carers and students in getting into school and having good school attendance. The Government expects that all students should have an attendance level of at least 93% for secondary students.

Support is also available from outside agencies at the Local Authority by the completion of a form; this is called a Safeguarding Hub Enquiry Form (SHEF) and can be completed with parents/carers, students and the school.

There are several ways that the school can work with parents/carers to address attendance issues and these can be split in to voluntary and legal interventions.

Students with an attendance of 85% or below are deemed as Persistent Absentees (PAs); this is a term used by the Government, Local Authority and schools to identify students that have poor school attendance. Intervention for these students will be necessary for the school, parents/carers and pupils.

**Parenting Contracts**

The school will try and engage with parents into promoting good attendance through a Parenting Contract. The contract is a voluntary agreement between the school, parents/carers and young person; all parties agree to work together to ensure that the aim of the contract are fulfilled and the outcomes are successful. If a parent fails to engage or refuses to engage in this process a record of this will be kept on the pupil’s record. If a parent fails to attend a meeting where a Parent Contract is deemed appropriate the contract will be drawn up and posted to the parent along with a letter explaining the process. A review of 6 weeks is normally set.

If, at any time, a child has 10 or more unauthorised absences equating to 10% within a 6 months period, the school may attend a legal consultation with the Local Authority to consider legal options available.

Legal options include: Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders and Prosecution.

**Penalty Notices**

Where the decision has been made not to authorise a request for leave of absence, parents will be informed in writing. The Academy may send in a request to the Local Authority for the consideration of a Penalty Notice, who will then make the final decision about whether a Penalty Notice will be issued.

In addition to the use of Penalty Notices for unauthorised holiday, and as an alternative to prosecution, the Attendance Improvement Service at Torbay Council can issue Penalty Notices for other unauthorised absences (O codes and U codes). Penalty Notices may be issued when a student has 10 or more unauthorised absences in a six month period.

**Educational Supervision Orders:**

The Academy, in conjunction with Torbay Council, may consider applying to the courts for an Educational Supervision Order when a parent/carer fails to ensure their child has regular school attendance. Where a parent engages with the school and/or a Parenting Contract fails an Educational Supervision Order may be deemed appropriate.

The Academy will notify the Legal Department at Torbay Council and discuss each case individually; if the Legal Department deems an Educational Supervision Order appropriate the Local Authority will call a meeting. The Academy will have representation at the meeting and all paperwork to support the application.

The Academy will inform the parent that they are considering this option prior to the application.

If a parent/carer does not cooperate with the Educational Supervision Order (ESO) the parent/carer could be referred back to the court. A fine of up to £2500 could be imposed on the parent/carer.

**Prosecutions:**

Where an Educational Supervision Order fails or the application is deemed inappropriate, the Academy may apply to the Local Authority for a prosecution where attendance continues to be poor and where no improvement is seen.

The Academy will contact the Legal Department of the Local Authority to discuss each case individually; if the Legal Department deems a prosecution appropriate they will take the case from the Academy. The Academy will send representation and paperwork as required to support the case.

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent/carer, this could result in a more severe penalty including a fine of up to £2500, a Community Order or, in extreme cases a prison sentence of up to three months.

**Taking Pupils off Roll/Children Missing Education:**

Should a pupil transfer to another school, the Academy will continue to have the pupil’s name on roll until he/she has been placed on the roll of his/her new school. If a pupil appears to be not attending the Academy for a 10 day period of time and no contact can be made, the Academy will complete a Child Missing Education Form (CME) and submit this to the Local Authority. This may be completed after the young person has been missing from school as unauthorised absence for 10 consecutive days.

**Persistently Sick Pupils:**

If a pupil is unfortunate to be suffering from a long-term illness or on-going medical problems, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence from the hospital/G.P or CAMHS. This will be placed on the pupil’s file and submitted to the Local Authority with the pupil’s attendance figures every term.