

PADDINGTON ACADEMY

# Attendance Policy

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# Paddington Academy Attendance Policy

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## Introduction

At Paddington Academy we believe it is of vital importance that our students have good attendance at school as it contributes to the excellent progress that our students make over time. This is a successful Academy and all students play their part in achieving this success. We work hard to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to go on to achieve their best. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at Paddington Academy on time, every day the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the students with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence also disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at Paddington Academy is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Paddington Academy without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## Aims

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, students, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at Paddington Academy this policy sets out:

- Section 1: the practical procedures to be followed at Paddington Academy in relation to attendance.
- Section 2: the measures in place at Paddington Academy to promote regular attendance by its registered students.
- Section 3: the responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.
- Section 4: the action to be taken by staff if a registered student fails to attend school regularly.

## Section 1: Practical Procedures

There are clear links from this policy to our safeguarding and child protection duties as set out Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023). Our Safeguarding policy can be found on the Paddington Academy website.

### **The Admissions Register (or "school roll")**

The Academy is responsible for keeping the Admissions Register up-to-date. This contains specific personal details of every student along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.

We also hold emergency contact numbers for each student. It is our policy to hold more than one such number where possible, so that we have options to make contact with a responsible adult should the need arise.

A student's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances and we follow the DfE guidance on this.

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<sup>1</sup> [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

## The Attendance Register

The register will be taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and again during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the school will record whether every student is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

## Punctuality and Regular Attendance

The school day starts between 8.15am and 8.30am (depending on the year group of the student) and finishes at 3.25pm (2.50pm on Fridays). Punctuality is also important in ensuring that students are not missing out on valuable learning time through lateness.

## Lateness

Students at Paddington are expected to be on time as each day starts with a lesson. Registers are kept open during lesson 1 each morning and that this point, any student not present is marked absent. Students arriving late will be marked with an 'L' code unless they arrive after the morning register has closed, in which case they will be marked with a 'U' code.

## Absence

Parents must contact the school when their child is absent to explain that absence. This can be done as follows: by calling the school phone number of 0207 479 3900 and selecting option 1, or by emailing [office@paddington-academy.org](mailto:office@paddington-academy.org), with the following details:

1. Full name of the student
2. Student's year group and tutor group
3. Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child
4. Reason for absence

Where a reason for the absence is not received by 9am on the day of the absence, the school will contact the parents during the morning session on the same day to understand the reason for the absence.

Where further unexplained absences occur, the school will make further contact with the parent (including foster parents and/ or social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding why the absence has occurred, and when the student will return to school.

The correct absence code will be inputted into the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained and within five working days of the absence.

Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the student can be away from school. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. To request a leave of absence please collect a yellow absence request form from the Attendance Office at reception at least two weeks before the intended absence, except in the case of an emergency.

## Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance

This section sets out the measures in place at Paddington Academy to promote regular attendance by its registered students.

### **Promoting and Incentivising**

Paddington Academy will:

- Treat all students and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
- Set out expectations of attendance and reporting in the home-school agreement and communicate procedures clearly in admission’s interviews.
- Regularly inform parents about their child’s attendance and absence levels and also the impact of this on learning.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify students who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence related to a medical need and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps. Students will be provided with ‘Continuity of Learning’ work when absent for an extended period of time as a result of this which means that they are able to keep up with the curriculum while absent. Heads of Year will meet with the student on return and agree ways that the student can be supported on their return and Student Support Mentors will monitor their re-engagement with school each lesson and support with any ongoing medical needs where necessary.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance by individuals and tutor groups and make this visible in assemblies and on display around the school.

### **Data Strategy**

Paddington Academy understands that as poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early detection is crucial.

We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:

1. Identify and provide immediate additional support to students and/ or student cohorts that need it.
2. Look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

The Academy will typically carry out the following analysis:

- Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance (including punctuality) patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some children on certain days.
- Patterns of attendance and punctuality within sessions, to ensure that all students are attending all timetabled lessons.
- Half-termly, termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of students and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance.
- Benchmarking attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against Trust-level, local, regional and national data and sharing good practice with others for raising attendance.

We will use this analysis to identify students who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those students and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning. We will use the data to inform us regarding the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action. We will also provide regular attendance reports to Pastoral Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team to facilitate discussions with students.

### **Absence Reduction Strategy**

We will devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include students in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for specific groups of students. Individual students will be discussed at the weekly Student Support Panel meetings and pastoral leader's meetings will address strategies for particular groups.

Data and reports will be shared with the Local Governing Body.

As part of promoting regular attendance the school will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, in conjunction with guidance from Westminster Local Authority. This will be considered on an individual basis and we will seek to work, where appropriate, with families before this action is taken.

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

Paddington Academy recognises that 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 and therefore the attendance ambition for these students is the same as they are for any other student.

In working with their parents 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. This will include:

- Involving the SENCO in all discussions related to attendance concerns through the weekly Student Support Panel.
- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for students with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a student has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
- Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the student's Education, Health and Care Plan is accessed. In addition, the school will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see the School's SEN policy for further details on SEN support.
- Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers students may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

- Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance, recognising that such arrangements can be for a limited time only.
- Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at LGB Governing body meetings and in meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other agencies is accessed where necessary.

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 school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see the school’s policy on supporting students with medical conditions at school for further information.

In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising students and parents and will talk to them understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual student’s specific needs.

### **Part-time Timetables**

All Students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student’s best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package for a short period of time only.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it (monthly) with the student and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable using a blended approach of our Continuity of Learning plan and lessons in school.

### **Section 3: Particular Responsibilities**

**This section outlines responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.**

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is Daniel Riley-Furse who can be contacted on [Daniel.riley-furse@paddington-academy.org](mailto:Daniel.riley-furse@paddington-academy.org)
- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on “day 1” will be the Attendance Officer and the wider attendance team who will work alongside the year teams to identify unexplained absences.
- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will be the Attendance Officer with the support of the Head of Year and Student Support Mentor.
- Information and contact details of the school staff who students and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are those of the Attendance Officer on the main school number of 020 7479 3900.

- More detailed support on attendance can be requested from the Head of Year or the Child Protection Officer, Claire Newport [Claire.newport@paddington-academy.org](mailto:Claire.newport@paddington-academy.org) and Rana Honeini: [Rana.Honeini@paddington-academy.org](mailto:Rana.Honeini@paddington-academy.org)

#### **Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly**

**This section sets out the action to be taken by staff if a registered student fails to attend the school regularly.**

Where a student or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family. Wherever possible, we will keep this person consistent.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic the school will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the student or family is experiencing. In doing so, the school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support.

In the first instance, the school will support students and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we endeavour to work together with all partners to support students and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with students and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school, agreeing actions or interventions to address them and keeping those actions under regular review in discussion with students and families. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support, particularly through Westminster Early Help. Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners, as follows:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the student this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, individual tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an Education, Health and Care Plan or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary Early Help assessment.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents and student. This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance (Daniel Riley-Furse) or the assistant principal with overall responsibility for the key stage and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. The aim of these meetings will be to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the student and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.
- Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the school will work with the local authority to:
  - Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
  - Intensify support through statutory Children's Social Care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).



- Refer to the local authority for a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour. This would happen where a number of unauthorised absences have happened within a short period of time, according to the latest Westminster Local Authority guidelines.
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the student, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, the school will work together with all parties to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

### **Local Governing Body (LGB) Responsibilities**

The LGB recognises the importance of school attendance and will:

- Promote it through the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual students or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure Paddington Academy staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The LGB will also ensure:

- That the Attendance Policy and its contents are generally made known within Paddington Academy and to parents of registered students at the school, and
- That steps are taken at least once in every school year to bring the Attendance Policy to the attention of all those parents and students and all persons who work at the school (whether or not for payment).

### **Appendices**

#### [1 Working together to improve school attendance](#)

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this document, the terms 'parent' and 'parents' are interchangeable and apply equally to 'parents and carers' and includes foster parents and social workers where relevant.