

Our Ref: JGT/AMU

19 July 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance and Punctuality Update and Procedures

As a result of some students of Outwood Academy Danum having less than 97% attendance, and some students being persistently late to the Academy in a morning, there have been a number of changes and new initiatives put in place. I am writing to you to clarify our expectations and procedures in regard to attendance, so you are in the best possible position to support your child to attend and to achieve.

The Attendance Team

Our attendance team, Mrs Grayson and Mrs McNabola are the day-to-day administrators who ensure we fulfil our safeguarding responsibility and will be your contact in the attendance office for reporting absence. Mrs McNabola monitors attendance and punctuality closely and may contact you by phone regarding daily absence, punctuality concerns and identified attendance concerns. Mrs Knitter is our Education Welfare Officer who oversees attendance within the academy. She is the link between parents/carers, the academy and other agencies where there are serious attendance concerns. Mr Murray is the Assistant Principal who line manages the attendance team at Senior Leadership team level.

Punctuality

Arriving late puts your child at an immediate disadvantage and is embarrassing for them. Students are expected to arrive at the Academy by 8.15am. The first bell at 8.20am is a signal for students to move to lessons. Every student must be at their classroom in time for the second bell at 8.25am which signals the start of the lesson. Students arriving after 8.20am are considered to be late and any student arriving after 8.25am will receive a detention the following day except in exceptional cases where there is genuine reason for their lateness. Students will receive a late mark and any arrivals after 9am when the registers close, will receive a 'U' code in the register which is classed as unauthorised absence. A text message will be sent to parents/carers to inform them of their child's late arrival.

Lateness will be monitored closely and any student who is regularly late will be identified for intervention. This intervention will include a phone call home, student target card, and letters home. If lateness is persistent, parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss how we can work together to ensure your child arrives on time.

Reporting absence

Parents should notify the academy as soon as practical, if your child will be absent from school. You should only keep your child at home if they are too ill to attend (you will know!) Keeping your child off when it is avoidable gives them the message that school is not important. A text message will be sent to all parents/carers of absent students, if we haven't received notification of the absence. Please ensure we have up to date contact details for your child.

Medical/Dental appointments etc.

Routine appointments should be arranged out of school hours. Where an emergency appointment or hospital/clinic appointments is required, please send your child to school as normal, your child can sign out in time for the appointment and should return to school afterwards. The Academy will require confirmation of the medical appointment in order to authorise any absence. Confirmation must be by way of an appointment card or letter.

How we respond to absence

We will always strive for 100% attendance for all students in order to maximise educational opportunities and achievement and to prepare students for the disciplines of adult working life. Students whose attendance falls below the academy target of 97% will be given priority for intervention. There are a variety of interventions, including: Learning Managers and VMG mentors who work with students within the academy; Learning Managers and attendance staff will telephone parents to highlight concerns and discuss supportive strategies; attendance letters will be sent to parents/carers to highlight concerns and offer support where required; meetings will be held in school and, in some cases, Mrs McNabola or Mrs Knitter will make home visits to discuss ways to help you and your child to achieve better attendance. Medical evidence for all absence is required, otherwise the absence will remain unauthorised.

Persistent Absence definition

A student whose attendance is 90% or below is classed as a persistent absentee by the Department for Education. Attendance at this level is causing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers' full support and co-operation to improve this. Students whose attendance is approaching the Persistent Absence level will be given priority for intervention in order to prevent them falling into this category. Where a student's attendance is poor the local authority may decide to take legal action.

Reminders

Parents/carers must not take students out of school for **holidays during term time**. The Academy Principal will not authorise any holidays and any absence unauthorised by the academy will result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice, (FPN).

Students in Y11 must have 97% attendance to attend **Prom**; all students must have 97% attendance to be included in out of **school trips**; and attendance is taken into consideration for **Y8 graduation**.

Attendance is discussed every week in VMG time and students note in their planner their weekly and current attendance level. Please check your child's planner weekly. Further information is available on the academy website, together with the academy attendance policy.

As a polite reminder, it is parents/carers legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of their child. Any sanctions imposed are intended as a positive measure to improve attendance.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support in ensuring your child attends every day and on time. It is by working in partnership that we can achieve the best outcomes for your child. We encourage parents/carers to contact the attendance office at any time to discuss your child's attendance and punctuality on 01302 831385 Ext 243.

Yours Sincerely,

A Murray

Mr A Murray
Assistant Principal.