14+ Academies

I'm In Attendance and Punctuality Appendix

Introduction

At the 14+ Academies we aim to maintain a culture of respect, effort, and commitment (attendance and punctuality). Missing out on education has a significant impact on young people's life opportunities and chances. Furthermore, there are clear links between commitment and positive outcomes for young people. Our aim is to provide a safe, welcoming and fun environment that young people enjoy attending. Moreover, high attendance and good punctuality is a matter of interest to employers in the future should the 14+ Academies be asked to provide a reference. It is excellent practice for learners to prove they are reliable and they should take pride in building these skills.

This appendix should be read alongside the Luminate Education Group Attendance and Punctuality Handbook. It sets out the additional and adapted arrangements that apply specifically to learners enrolled at the 14+ Academies.

Aims and Objectives

- To promote excellent commitment (attendance and punctuality) through positive relationships, early intervention and appropriate support.
- To ensure that learners' commitment is understood in relation to their academic, developmental and future success.
- To identify and understand barriers to commitment at the earliest opportunity and work collaboratively with learners, parents/carers and relevant professionals to address them.
- To recognise that absence can be an important safeguarding indicator and respond appropriately where concerns arise.
- To ensure that individual circumstances, additional needs and vulnerabilities are considered when responding to commitment concerns.

Equality and Inclusion

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the development and approval of the college-wide Attendance and Punctuality Handbook which sits as part of the Relationships and Behaviour Policy. As this appendix sits within and should be read alongside these documents, the 14+ Academies I'm In Attendance and Punctuality Appendix falls within the scope of that assessment. In applying this appendix, the 14+ Academies will continue to consider individual and group circumstances in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) including additional needs and reasonable adjustments to ensure that the policy is applied fairly and equitably.

Attendance and Safeguarding

Attendance is an important part of safeguarding. Patterns of absence, repeated absence or a learner going missing from education may indicate wider welfare or safeguarding concerns. Staff will remain professionally curious about the reasons for absence and will respond in accordance with the College's safeguarding procedures where concerns are identified. Where a learner has known safeguarding involvement or other vulnerabilities, attendance concerns will be considered alongside the learner's wider circumstances and, where appropriate, relevant professionals will be involved in planning support.

Parents/Carers

We believe that the triangle between learners, staff and parents/carers is vital to the success of a learner's time at the 14+ Academies. As well as the learner investing their time and effort in following the behaviour policy, in choosing to send their young person to the 14+ Academies, we also expect parents/carers to commit to supporting the policies and their young people.

High attendance maximises learning opportunities and parents/carers play a vital role in this. Learners who attend regularly and on time make better progress both academically and developmentally. We therefore ask for support from parents/carers to ensure their young person is present at every opportunity and arrive on time. This includes making sure learners do not stay at home unnecessarily and are not taken out of college without authorisation. The 14+ Academies will offer a variety of communication to parents/carers regarding their young persons commitment including in the form of phone calls, emails, letters, and Parentapps, as well as updates through Personal Progress Days and Academic Updates.

Reporting Absence

If a young person is too ill to attend or there is a genuine and unavoidable reason for absence, one of their emergency contacts should contact the 14+ Academies by telephone call on the first day of absence as early as possible (the 14+ Academies can only accept notification of any absence from those listed as an emergency contact). This process should be followed on each additional day of absence until the young person returns.

We take the wellbeing and safeguarding of our learners seriously. If the 14+ Academies have received no reason for absence, phone calls are made to emergency contacts to understand the reason for absence and to ensure the young person is safe. These calls are made on the morning of the first absence and each subsequent morning. Parents/carers can help by ensuring that we hold up to date contact details for emergency contacts. If we are unable to get through to parents/carers when calling to establish the reason for the absence, the Engagement Team will send a message to the young person via Google Chat as a secondary measure.

Where insufficient information has been provided to establish the reason for an absence, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Where there is a frequent or ongoing pattern of absence reported as illness, the 14+ Academies may request appropriate supporting information or medical evidence to enable the absence to be considered for authorisation and to help identify any additional support that may be required.

Punctuality

In order to develop good habits and prepare young people for their futures, learners are expected to arrive at college on time and prepared to learn - any learners who arrive late must sign in at the SLT office (Room B2:04). We ask that emergency contacts inform the 14+ Academies if their young person is going to be late to assist us in safeguarding our young people.

Punctuality to lessons and sessions are also vitally important and play a role in the success of learners during their time with us as well as their progression into further education or employment. Arriving late to any sessions or lessons is disruptive to all learners and progress is compromised.

Appointments

We ask that, where possible, parents/carers make routine medical and other appointments outside of college time to minimise the disruption to the young persons' progress. If this is not possible, we require advance notification of the appointment day, time and reason including evidence of the appointment to enable us, in most cases, to authorise the absence. Every effort should be made for the young person to attend before the appointment and return afterwards, wherever possible. Learners must sign out at the SLT office before they leave the 14+ Academies unless it is at the end of the college day.

Leave of Absence

From time to time the 14+ Academies may authorise other types of special leave of absence such as compassionate leave or religious observations. If parents/carers wish for their young person to be absent for a special circumstance, this request needs to be made in writing, in advance where possible. The 14+ Academies will consider each request individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Leaving College Without Permission / Missing from College

Where a learner leaves the 14+ Academies without permission or cannot be located when they are expected to be on site, staff will take appropriate steps to establish their whereabouts and assess any associated risk. Parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible and relevant safeguarding information will be considered when determining the response. Where there are concerns for the learner's safety or welfare, relevant safeguarding procedures will be followed and the Police or other agencies may be contacted where appropriate. Where parents/carers cannot be contacted, staff will continue attempts to make contact while taking appropriate action according to the level of risk identified.

Holidays in Term Time

We understand that there may be circumstances in which some parents/carers may feel that taking a holiday during term time is the most appropriate option for their family. Taking holidays in term will impact a young person's progress academically and developmentally and therefore we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking young people away in term time where possible. For this reason, the 14+ Academies will not authorise permission for holidays to be taken during term time, and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Rewarding Good Commitment(Positive Consequence)

The 14+ Academies believes one of the key strategies in promoting a positive environment is through the use of rewards. As such, learners are rewarded for their hard work and effort at college in a variety of areas including attendance, punctuality, behaviour, showing respect and trying their best. The list below details just some of the ways that learners attendance and punctuality are rewarded and celebrated:

- Verbal praise
- Stamps
- Accolades (Year 11 Reward Trip)
- Postcards
- Stamp Recognition Awards
- Engagement Award
- Learner of the Week
- Learner of the Half Term
- Positive calls and emails to parents/carers
- Reward breakfasts and form times
- Extended lunches
- Reward afternoons
- End of term awards
- Half Termly reward afternoons
- Certificates placed in record of achievement
- Variety of trips including surprise events and leisure activities

Individual Needs and Vulnerabilities

When responding to commitment concerns, staff will consider any identified SEND, EHCP, care experience, safeguarding involvement or other known vulnerabilities. Staff will refer to any agreed support plans and reasonable adjustments will be considered throughout the process, including whether a learner's needs or circumstances may be contributing to absence and what additional or alternative support may be required.

Supporting Learners with Commitment

A wide range of support strategies are available to all learners to ensure their time at the 14+ Academies is successful both developmentally and academically, including in regards to commitment:

- Commitment monitoring
- Commitment reflections and updates
- Temporary meet and greet arrangements
- Restorative conversations and targeted attendance and punctuality interventions
- Individualised attendance and punctuality targets
- Targeted interventions during and after college hours
- Commitment Improvement Plans
- Commitment tracking within learner journals
- Self-help walls and sessions
- Range of extra-curricular sessions
- Access to wellbeing drop-in sessions and/or counselling appointments
- Support and interventions with Learner Wellbeing Practitioner

- Workshops delivered by external partners focussing on wellbeing and safety as well as progression from young person to young adult
- Referral to internal teams (including wellbeing, safeguarding and careers teams)
- Referral to external agencies (including Children Social Work Services, Education Psychology Service, MindMate, Forward Leeds, Basis, Sexual Health Clinic and Eating Disorders Team).

More specific approaches may be taken in order when monitoring commitment to encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality:

Home Visits

If deemed necessary, the 14+ Academies may undertake home visits to speak with learners and their parents/carers to understand and support absence, or if the welfare or safeguarding of learners causes concerns, including in relation to CME (Child Missing in Education).

Return to College Meetings

This is a supportive measure that ensures the young person feels supported on their return to the 14+ Academies after a prolonged period of absence. It allows any concerns or anxieties the learner may have to be raised and addressed to enable a smooth reintegration back to attending.

Commitment Improvement Meetings

Parents/carers, along with their young person, may be invited to attend a Commitment Improvement Meeting in college in order to understand the context and reasons behind prolonged and persistent absences or concerns relating to punctuality. This will also be an opportunity to put further support measures in place and set realistic targets for improvement. The system operates with stage 1, 2 and 3 referred to as ‘Commitment Improvement Meetings’, which will be held by the Engagement and Development teams. Where attendance or punctuality concerns continue despite the support and interventions provided through the Commitment Improvement Meeting process, consideration may be given to progressing to the Behaviour Support Meeting process in accordance with the 14+ Academies Relationships & Behaviour Policy Appendix.

Behaviour Support Meetings

The 14+ Academies follows the three-stage Behaviour Support Meeting process described in Section 5 of the college-wide Relationships and Behaviour Policy, with the following adapted arrangements for 14+ learners. During all meetings, parents/carers will be requested to attend. Stages 1 and 2 will be completed by members of the SLT and stage 3 completed by a senior leader from within the wider college. The staff members leading the meeting will direct conversation primarily at the learner to understand what the current situation is, and to plan a positive outcome using a range of strategies including targets being set to support a positive outcome.

Alternative Placements

The 14+ Academies has a range of alternative provisions to consider for learners who, for a variety of reasons including poor attendance and punctuality, are not meeting expectations. All alternative provisions are robustly monitored to ensure learners academic and developmental progress is tracked.

Removal from Roll

The 14+ Academies is committed to retaining learners in education wherever possible, and removal from roll will only be considered as a last resort or in exceptional circumstances.

Where a range of appropriate support, interventions and reasonable adjustments have been implemented but attendance and/or punctuality concerns remain significant, the College may consider whether the learner's continued placement at the 14+ Academies remains appropriate.

Where removal from roll is determined to be the appropriate outcome, the 14+ Academies will work with the learner, parent/carer, Local Authority and other relevant professionals, as appropriate, to support the learner's transition and fulfil any statutory requirements.

Child Missing in Education

A Child Missing in Education (CME) is a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school or otherwise receiving suitable education. As learners enrolled at the 14+ Academies are of compulsory school age, concerns regarding learners who are missing from education will be treated as both an attendance and safeguarding matter.

Where a learner ceases to attend, their whereabouts are unknown, or there are significant concerns regarding continued non-attendance, the 14+ Academies will take reasonable steps to establish the learner's circumstances and support their return to education. This may include contact with the learner and parent/carer, home visits, liaison with relevant internal teams and external professionals, and referral to or liaison with the Local Authority where appropriate.

The response will take account of the learner's individual circumstances and any known vulnerabilities, including SEND, EHCP, care experience, safeguarding involvement and information held by other professionals. Where concerns regarding a learner's safety or welfare are identified, these will be managed in accordance with the College's safeguarding procedures.

A learner will not be removed from roll solely because they have stopped attending or cannot be located. Before any removal from roll is considered, the 14+ Academies will take appropriate steps to establish the learner's circumstances, involve the Local Authority and other relevant professionals as appropriate, and consider any statutory requirements relating to children of compulsory school age.
Where a learner's whereabouts cannot be established or they are believed to be missing from education, the 14+ Academies will work with the relevant Local Authority in accordance with applicable CME procedures.