

## **Oasis Academy South Bank Attendance Guidance**

**(To be read in conjunction with Oasis Community Learning Attendance Policy, available at:**

**[https://oasiscommunitylearning.finalsite.com/uploaded/National\\_Policies/Attendance\\_Policy.pdf](https://oasiscommunitylearning.finalsite.com/uploaded/National_Policies/Attendance_Policy.pdf))**

### **1. Aims**

- To ensure that overall Academy attendance is 97% or higher
- To raise the profile of the importance of high-level attendance among students, parents and other staff
- To outline a procedure for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies
- To eradicate persistent lateness
- To explain the legal processes for persistent lateness and absence

### **2. Legislation and guidance**

By law, all children of compulsory academy age (5 to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens - either by registering their child at an academy or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. As a last resort, schools and local authorities have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

The Academy seeks to operate in ways which maximise student potential while supporting parents in meeting their legal requirements.

The Academy fulfils its responsibilities in respect of taking a morning and afternoon session registration; of being open for the required 190 student academy days unless prevented by extreme weather or other unforeseen exceptional circumstance, and by using the nationally recognised attendance codes.

### **3. Academy procedures**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

In line with Department for Education guidance, Oasis Academy South Bank will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. The morning register will close at 09:10, meaning any subsequent student arrival will be coded as an unauthorised absence unless there is sufficient reason for this to be authorised.

#### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

If a student is absent from the Academy, it is vital that a parent contacts the Academy at the earliest opportunity to provide a reason for absence, and no later than 8am. Primarily, student absence should be communicated via the My Child At School app via the messaging feature. In the event that absence cannot be

communicated via My Child At School, please email [office@oasisouthbank.org](mailto:office@oasisouthbank.org) or contact 020 7921 4531.

Absence can only be authorised where there is good cause. If no adequate reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised. The decision and authority to authorise an absence lays with the Academy in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996. Parents cannot authorise absence. Where deemed necessary, the Academy reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness. After five days of authorised absence across the academic year, or three days of consecutive authorised absence, the Academy will unauthorise all subsequent absence. The process by which the Academy determines authorisation of absence can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.3 Medical or dental appointments

It is an expectation of the academy that medical and dental appointments are taken out of school time. Missing lessons, even for medical and dental appointments, has a detrimental impact on student progress and achievement.

The academy recognises that it is not always possible to schedule appointments out of school time. In the rare occasion that a student must attend a medical appointment during school time, parents must notify the academy office in advance and provide evidence of the appointment. Patterns of medical and dental appointments during school sessions over a period of time will result in further follow up investigation and action. Regardless of the reason, all medical appointments are recorded as an absence, and will impact upon the student's overall attendance percentage.

### 3.4 Lateness and punctuality

It is the Academy's responsibility to provide the best education possible. This can only be achieved if a student attends regularly and punctually. The Academy expects all students to arrive at the academy, registrations and sessions on time. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. A student arriving late will disrupt not only their own continuity of learning but also that of others. Occasional lateness to the academy or lessons will result in correction; patterns of lateness over a period of time will result in further follow up investigation and action.

All students should arrive at the academy by 08:20 ready for the line-up at 08:30. Sessions begin at 8.30. The register will close at 09:10, and subsequent student arrivals will be recorded with an unauthorised absence, unless there is valid reason for this to be authorised.

### 3.5 Following up absence

Parents of a student who is not present in school will be notified of their absence. Parents have the responsibility to inform Oasis Academy South Bank of student absence. It is a safeguarding priority for us to know the whereabouts of all students.

Absences will be followed up through the attendance intervention system, which will include, but is not limited:

- Phone calls to parents/guardians
- Attendance Letters
- Meetings with House Coaches and the Pastoral Team
- Home Visits
- Attendance Trackers
- Attendance Contracts

### 3.6 Reporting to parents and carers

In order to support parents in meeting their legal requirements and to maximise individual student attendance, the Academy seeks to keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and to actively involve parents on attendance issues.

Methods include:

- Unexplained/unaccounted for absence letter asking for reasons
- Escalating letters warning of concerns
- Parental meetings
- Attendance percentages included on student reports and reported annually
- Discussion at Parents' Meetings/Evenings

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

In order to maximise individual achievement, parents should avoid making routine appointments for students during the academy day. Parents should not take family holidays during the term time period.

Parents should be advised that leave of absence can only be authorised at the discretion of the Principal and will only be agreed in very exceptional circumstances. Further information regarding this can be found in the OCL Attendance Policy. On the rare occasion that absences is requested, this should be submitted via the 'Request Planned Absence' form available on the Oasis South Bank website. It should be submitted to reception no later than 7 days before the planned absence.

### 4.2 Legal sanctions

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends the Academy on a regular and punctual basis. Should any student's attendance or punctuality become a concern, they will be subject to an Education Welfare referral. The Academy and Lambeth Local Authority will work in partnership where legal action is required.

Legal action includes:

- Penalty Notice: A Penalty Notice may be issued for each student who has unauthorised absence or lateness. Following 6 sessions of unauthorised absence, a Penalty Warning Letter will be issued. There will be a review for three weeks, and should the student's attendance continue to decline, a

Penalty Notice will be issued once the pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.

A fixed penalty notice can be issued without warning in whereby:

A leave of absence of 5 days (10 sessions) or more was taken during term time without the school's consent.

If an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken and there have been instances of previous unauthorised absences in an 8 week period. This can be one day.

Where a parent has taken the pupil on holiday during term-time with the school's authorisation and has failed to return the pupil to school on the date agreed.

The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 42 day period, a prosecution will be sought.

- Prosecution for unauthorised absence: It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the Academy. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. If a student's attendance continues to decline, and unauthorised absence increases despite efforts by the Academy to support the pupil in attending school, a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service, upon which a Court Panel meeting will be convened.

Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is a whole academy initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, students and all members of academy staff.

The diagram below highlights the whole academy approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. This is led by the Attendance and Punctuality lead teacher who works with academy staff to monitor and improve attendance, while raising the profile and emphasising the importance of attendance at individual and whole academy level.



**Green: No Concern**

**Yellow: Concern**

**Amber: Risk of Underachievement**

**Pink: Severe Risk of Underachievement**

**Red: Extreme Concern**

In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement, the Academy uses a range of rewards and positive reinforcement strategies. As appropriate to student age these include:

- House Group awards for highest attendance
- Display of individual attendance
- Display of house/class attendance
- Certificates
- Weekly Head of Year Assembly mentions
- Celebration Assembly prizes
- Letters home

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The Academy has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in respect of attendance concern.

The principles underpinning the model will be used to promote consistency both across the different year groups of compulsory academy age and within each year group. In summary these are as follows:

- The attendance statistics for every student at the Academy will be displayed weekly in assembly or in House Time
- Attendance matters will receive positive reinforcement in assemblies and line ups.
- The House Coach is responsible for the overview of attendance in their group; however they are supported by other staff from the Pastoral Team, and other academy staff.

In cases that levels of attendance decreases, the Academy will make use of the following escalation guidance:

- 1) **97% - 100%, or increased attendance-** Students in this group are in the best possible position to achieve their full potential in GCSEs, leading to secure their dream job. Heads of Year and House Coaches will celebrate these students weekly, and the academy will recognise and reinforce their level of attendance.
- 2) **Yellow 95% – 96.9%, or an initial fall in attendance** - Students in this group will receive intervention and support from their House Coach and the Attendance Officer to increase their attendance to above 97%. This will be in the form of a letter home and a phone call with the Attendance Officer or House Coach.
- 3) **Amber 93% - 94.9%, or consecutive weeks of falling attendance** - Students in this group will receive intervention and support from their Head of Year to increase their attendance to above 95%. This will be in the form of a letter home and a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team.
- 4) **Pink 90% - 92.9%, or repeated consecutive or non-consecutive weeks of falling attendance** - Students in this group will receive intervention and support from as part of a School Attendance Panel as well as intervention plan linked to the Inclusion Team. At this point, as the student is close to falling below the Government Persistent Absentee rate, a legal action warning letter will be administered.
- 5) **Red 0 - 89.9%, or persistent consecutive or non-consecutive weeks of falling attendance** - Students in this group will receive intervention and support from the Assistant Principal- Wellbeing and Achievement, as well as the wider Senior Leadership Team. This will be in the form of a letter home, meeting with the AP-Wellbeing and Achievement, and an inclusion plan linked to the Inclusion Team. As this attendance percentage continues to fall below the Government Persistent Absence target, it may be necessary to refer the poor attendance to the Education Welfare Officer and Legal Services at the Local Authority. They may wish to work with parents/carers to improve the

attendance of the students in the red group. This includes taking legal action where required.

To support this process the Pastoral Team will meet weekly to discuss students whose attendance is declining. A series of actions to support improvement will be agreed, delegated and recorded.

## 7. Children at Risk of Missing Education

Policies and guidance related to Children at Risk of Missing Education can be found in the OCL Attendance Policy.

The contact for Lambeth CME issues is: [inclusion@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:inclusion@lambeth.gov.uk)

## 8. Students leaving the academy and off-rolling

The OASB has a commitment to safeguard students. Therefore, destination of all students who leave the academy will be tracked.

Academy leaders will ensure that detailed records are kept for students who stop attending the academy and are removed from the roll/admissions register.



## Appendix 1: The procedure by which the Academy determines unauthorised absence

