



# Joseph Leckie Academy

## Attendance Policy

This policy is reviewed annually

History of Document

Approved by Governors: 14/02/2018

Review date for Document: 14/02/2019

## Introduction

The Governing Body of Joseph Leckie Academy is committed to providing education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises that excellent attendance is a key influence on attainment. The Academy's commitment is based on evidence that through regular, high attendance and punctuality, our students will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on high levels of attendance. Full attendance is the aim of the Academy. This policy establishes what is expected of students, with regard to their attendance, the roles and responsibilities for all members of the Academy, along with the expectations of the parents and carers and of local and national agencies.

## Policy Principles

The Academy will:

- have an expectation of 100% attendance;
- work actively with students and their families to maximise attendance;
- ensure that this policy is consistently applied and clearly communicated to parents, carers, students, staff and the wider Academy community, including support agencies;
- support parents and carers in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of students;
- respond promptly to issues which may lead to non-attendance;
- be sensitive to the needs of students, parents and carers through the provision of translators and/or through home visits;
- use sanctions where there is evidence of a parent/carer failing to ensure regular attendance of their child;
- acknowledge, praise, reward and celebrate good attendance.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### **The Principal**

- Set challenging targets to at least meet national averages for the Academy overall.
- Ensure strategy is devised to make solid progress towards them.
- Appoint the Attendance Lead, currently Mr Pochin on the Leadership Team. Provide sufficient time for Attendance Lead to supervise attendance management and to become involved with poor attenders. Also ensure there is sufficient time to analyse data, liaise with teachers and Local Authority officers. Give the Attendance Lead the responsibility to lead on whole Academy policy and strategy.
- Receive reports on attendance at whole Academy, year group and class level. Discuss both strengths and weaknesses publicly and give attendance a high status in the Academy. Talk personally to teachers and tutors whose classes show poor attendance. Encourage these teachers to take responsibility for making improvements.
- Take a personal interest in attendance and support intervention with the poorest attenders.
- Report statistics to the Attendance Governor and as part of the termly report to governors.
- Show comparative figures to indicate progress over time, not isolated statistics.
- Compare each half-term's figures with those for the previous year, for the same time.

### **Academy Attendance Lead**

- Work with the Principal to agree relevant internal attendance targets. Monitor attendance weekly and evaluate progress towards the targets. Identify students who are likely to

jeopardise the Academy's and their own performance and plan early intervention to avoid bad habits being established.

- Monitor attendance at Academy, year group and class level. Work in strong collaboration with the Principal to praise strengths and point out weaknesses.
- Ensure there is a clear attendance policy, showing who will do what and at what threshold.
- Keep attendance at the forefront of each member of staff's mind. Convince all staff that attendance is our collective responsibility.
- Promote regular attendance, by making use of reward systems, assemblies, parents' evenings, performance reviews, etc.
- Involve the governing body, mainly through the Attendance Governor. Seek the support of governors in promoting good attendance.
- Line manage the Attendance Team. Ensure registers are checked daily and that the required action at each threshold level is taken at the earliest moment possible. Discourage any sense of collusion between parents who allow absence without good reason.
- Revise strategy to address issues with each individual student or family.

### **Head of Year**

- Promote the message that 100% attendance is the expectation.
- Have an overview of the attendance patterns for all students within their Year.
- Promote the value of good attendance in assemblies and through rewards.
- Challenge tutors to raise attendance figures in their forms.
- Organise rewards schemes to motivate individuals and form groups.
- Meet regularly with Attendance Team to receive updates on attendance data and interventions.
- Advise the Attendance Lead of any tutor who fails to maintain the register properly.
- Registers are legal documents and must be kept carefully and accurately.
- Attend panel meetings for students in their own Year.
- Establish and maintain a wall of fame to promote good attendance.
- Meet with individual students and families to address poor attendance levels. Do this in partnership with the Attendance Intervention Officer AIO.
- To be a member of the Pastoral Board

### **Head of Faculty/Department**

- Is responsible for ensuring that class teachers take registers in every lesson including lessons where cover is employed.
- Will act on information received from ADO to keep registers up to date.
- Be responsible for following up lesson truancy and for taking appropriate action.

### **Class Teacher / Form Tutor**

- Do not accept poor attendance. Make 100% attendance the expectation.
- Promote regular attendance through rewards and other encouragement. Make it your business and make it clear that poor or erratic attendance is not expected or acceptable.
- Ensure that registers are always fully completed; never leave blank spaces.
- Look carefully at attendance data. Make it your business to spot patterns of absence and overall levels of attendance of individuals.
- Make a personal connection with parents of students who have regular absence, patterns of irregular attendance as well as good or improving attendance patterns.

- Ensure the Principal or Attendance Lead is informed of concerns over attendance.
- Following absence, do your best to provide catch-up opportunities so absentees do not fall behind.
- Be prepared to be assertive. Parents must explain absence. Explanations need to be plausible. Avoid any sense of collusion with parents over unnecessary absence.
- Issue attendance letters where required. Make sure they have the effect intended. Do not tolerate a lack of response. Seek advice when you need it.
- Check and file all absence notes that are received, and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.
- Pass messages from parents efficiently to the class teacher or other relevant member of staff.
- Ask parents to play a part in reinforcing missed learning.

### **Attendance Data Officer (ADO)**

- Follow the Academy's procedures for first day calling. If no explanation has been received by the time registers close, make appropriate enquiries.
- Be prepared to be assertive. Parents must explain absence. Explanations need to be plausible. Avoid any sense of collusion with parents over unnecessary absence.
- Provide data on weekly basis to HOY, class teachers and the Academy's Attendance Lead.
- Assist the Attendance Lead, Attendance Intervention Officer (AIO) and others in collating data for inclusion in reports, attendance returns, etc.
- Issue appropriate attendance letters where required. Make sure they have the intended effect. Do not tolerate a lack of response. Seek advice when you need it.
- Hold regular discussions with the Attendance Lead. Ensure the system works. If it does not, come up with suggestions to improve it.
- Provide data on weekly basis to class teachers and the Academy's Attendance Lead.
- Record key interventions in SIMS.
- Make sure the Attendance Lead and/or the Principal know about families where bad habits are forming. Make sure action is taken to break bad habits at the earliest opportunity.
- Assist the Attendance Lead, Attendance Intervention Officer and others in collating data for inclusion in reports, attendance returns, etc.
- Check and file all absence notes that are received, and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.
- Pass messages from parents efficiently to the class teacher or other relevant member of staff.
- If teachers fail to complete registers, ADO to send personal, electronic reminder and to advise HoF.

### **Attendance Intervention Officer (AIO)**

- Follow the Academy's procedures for first day calling. If no explanation has been received by the time registers close, make appropriate enquiries.
- Be prepared to be assertive. Parents must explain absence. Explanations need to be plausible. Avoid any sense of collusion with parents over unnecessary absence.
- Do not show sympathy over absence unless you are convinced it is genuine.
- Issue appropriate attendance letters where required. Make sure they have the intended effect. Do not tolerate a lack of response. Seek advice when you need it.
- Make a personal connection with parents of students who have regular absence, or patterns of irregular attendance.

- Make sure the Attendance Lead and/or the Principal know about families where bad habits are forming. Make sure action is taken to break bad habits at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure the Principal or Attendance Lead is informed of concerns over attendance.
- Arrange home visits, with additional staff, as necessary, to assess a child's wellbeing.
- Implement strategies to support a student's return to the Academy.
- Use data analysis tools to identify students with falling attendance figures and plan for appropriate interventions.
- Provide regular feedback to Form Tutors, Heads of Year and families regarding improving student attendance.
- To convene attendance panel meetings.
- Record key interventions in SIMS.
- To be a member of the Pastoral Board.

### **Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO)**

- Support AIO with home visits that require language translation
- Support AIO with home visits where there are existing, historic lines of communication or where there has been a professional working relationship between the Academy and the family
- Organise, collate and deliver work to students at home and collect and return completed work for marking and assessment
- To attend Attendance Panel meeting to support and advise AIO, LT Link, HOY

### **Students**

- Attend morning registration, assembly or mentoring class by 8.35.
- Attend all lessons, punctually.
- Bring a parental signed and dated note to their tutor explaining absence. This should be in the planner or on paper.

### **Parents and Carers**

- Are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly.
- Must be prepared to provide written, medical authorisation for absence.
- Inform the Academy, immediately, when a child is being kept away from school for any period of time.
- Parents must explain absence. Explanations need to be provided.
- Avoid any sense of collusion with other students or families over unnecessary absence.
- Can expect the Academy to make regular contact with families to monitor their child's progress in any recovery.

### Absence thresholds and intervention triggers

#### **Initial and ongoing responsibilities**

- Teacher reports lesson truancy to HoD/HoF. Teachers to set detention for students to catch up missed work and notify parents – directly or with assistance of AIO.
- Form tutor monitors student attendance, following up absences through notes and parental contact.
- If attendance falls below 95%, student referred by tutor to AIO, HOY and parents informed.
- Teachers and form tutors identify persistent and falling patterns of absence and refer concerns to HoF/HOY for investigation and possible interventions with AIO support or sanctions.

- ADO to monitor daily attendance through SIMS system and Truancy Call
- AIO to monitor overall student attendance through SIMS and liaison with ADO.

### **Referrals**

- Tutor concerns forwarded to HOY & SC staff to raise student concerns at weekly attendance meetings with ADO. ADO to monitor attendance patterns and provide feedback – deterioration, improvement or no change.
- Use Discover Groups to identify students at intervention trigger points
- Students with attendance below 95% added to a caseload of attendance staff for interventions

### **Caseload**

- AIO to receive the majority of cases and is the first point of contact for sub 95% attendance
- Students with a history of poor attendance or known family concerns, passed to HSLO, who will advise AIO on effective strategies and, where appropriate, provide support.

### **Intervention Stage One by Tutor with HOY support**

- Tutor meets with student to identify reasons for non-attendance, or phone call home to family
- Tutor sets realistic attendance target and date for follow up meeting. Student to write this in their planner and receive counter signature from parent/carer.
- Telephone parents to inform them of intervention and expected outcomes. Inform HOY and tutor (if carried out by AIO). Add intervention record to SIMS.
- Tutor monitor attendance patterns for two weeks.

### **Attendance Target for Stage One Completed**

- Student's attendance data shows a significant and sustained improvement, 95% or above, within one week of the meeting.
- Issue Vivo reward points via tutor/good news card and telephone parents
- Tutor to monitoring for the remainder of the term to ensure improvement is sustained.
- Students failing to achieve 95% attendance in one week move to Stage Two
- Attendance below 92% moves students directly to Stage Two

### **Intervention Stage Two lead by AIO**

- AIO and HOY meeting with parents, according to caseload allocation. Tutor to attend where possible.
- No further absences will be authorised
- Two week intensive attendance monitoring and support by tutor and the student meets with AIO. Student on attendance report to HOY using SIMS Report Card, monitored by tutor. Progress reported to parent/carer and HOY. AIO to set up Discover Group to support monitoring.
- Link LT member informed of student attendance issues. Link LT meets with student to discuss support mechanism and consequences during monitoring period. LT link to focus on progress, attainment and life chances.

### **Attendance Target for Stage Two Completed**

- Student's attendance data shows a significant and sustained improvement, 90% or above, post meeting. Maintain regular (weekly) contact with student and family to drive attendance to 95%.

- Issue Vivo reward points via tutor/good news card and telephone parents
- Monitor via SIMS system, AIO contact family if attendance begins to decline
- Students failing to make and sustain required improvements move to Stage Three
- Students with attendance below 90% move to Stage Three

#### **Intervention Stage Three lead by AIO with HSLO support**

- 1st official home visit by AIO or AIO with HSLO. Visit and outcomes documented on SIMS.
- Deliver first warning letter to parents, see appendix on letters to parents
- Link LT member contacted, data provided by ADO, and made aware of impending panel meeting.
- Attendance panel meeting convened. Student, parent/carer, HOY, AIO, link leadership member.
- Students failing to make and sustain the required improvements move to Stage 4 Four
- Students with attendance below 88% move directly to Stage Four

#### **Attendance Target for Stage Three Completed**

- Student's attendance data shows a significant and sustained improvement, 90% or above, post meeting. Maintain regular (weekly) contact with student and family to drive attendance to 95%.
- Issue Vivo reward points via tutor/good news card and telephone parents
- Monitor via SIMS system, AIO contact family if attendance begins to decline
- Students failing to make and sustain required improvements move to Stage Four
- Students with attendance below 88% move directly to Stage Four

#### **Intervention Stage Four**

- Second official home visit by AIO or AIO with HSLO. Visit and outcomes documented on SIMS.
- Principal advised of student's absence, reasons for absence and interventions to date
- Official request for parents to attend Governors Attendance Panel. Address impediments to attendance and agree strategies to immediately improve attendance. Alert parents to the consequences of failing to ensure regular attendance.
- Parental Attendance Contract to be signed, see documents appendix.

#### **Attendance Target for Stage Four Completed**

- Student's attendance data shows a significant and sustained improvement, 90% or above within 10 school days. Maintain regular (weekly) contact with student and family to drive attendance to 95%.
- Student and family formally advised of legal ramifications of failing to ensure regular attendance.
- Issue Vivo rewards/Good news card and telephone parents to re-enforce support for progress made.
- Monitor attendance through custom Discover Groups. Daily contact with student and family as appropriate.
- Students failing to make or sustain the required improvements move to Stage Five.

#### **Intervention Stage Five**

- Academy to consider issuing penalty notice on a case by case basis by the Principal, leadership link, HOY, tutor and attendance team.

- Referral to Education Welfare Officer (EWO); this will lead to parental prosecution for a failure to ensuring their child attend school regularly.

#### **Attendance Target for Stage Five Completed**

- Legal procedures implemented.
- Parents/carers and student advised that Stage Four procedures will be invoked.
- Principal, Leadership Link, HOY and tutor updated.

#### **Attendance Panel Meeting**

- Identify the reasons for non-attendance
- Inform parents and students 96% attendance or better is expected.
- Inform parents of the 90% threshold for persistent absence (PA).
- Inform parents and students of the negative impact of poor attendance on learning, attainment, progress and life chances.
- All parties agree on the need for immediate rapid and sustained improvement in attendance.
- Advise parents that a referral to the local authority is likely if no immediate and sustained improvement in attendance is seen.
- Attendance below 96% is a cause for concern and will continue to trigger interventions with AIO, Head of Year and HSLO.
- Discuss and give consideration to the use of parenting contracts and further support from third party agencies to promote attendance and support the family.
- Inform parents and students that attendance monitoring will continue.
- AIO will remain in regular contact with the family to report progress or further causes for concern.
- Inform parents that EWO referral is being considered, highlight current legislation and possible future proceeding in the event of continued PA.

#### **Authorising Absence**

The Academy recognises the clear link between attendance and attainment, and between attendance and safeguarding children. Parental condoned absences are not acceptable and will always be challenged. Parents cannot authorise absence. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, parents will be requested to provide details of the need and reasons for their child's absence. Requests for such information should be made by the Tutor, HOY, a member of the Attendance Team or Leadership Link. The AIO will encourage parents to keep their child's absences to a minimum. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Principal.

#### **Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:**

- A student is to participate in an Academy approved event
- Where the student has a medical appointment (parents will be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to the Academy immediately afterwards – or send him/her to the Academy beforehand). Medical evidence is required for medical appointments.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's family belongs. One day only, will be authorised.

## Unauthorised Absence

### **Family Holidays and Extended Visits Overseas during Term Time.**

The Principal will not authorise the absence of students from the Academy during term-time for the purpose of taking a holiday. Parents and carers may request leave of absence for their son or daughter for a maximum of 10 school days, once during an academic year. Whilst there is no mechanism to prevent parents taking holidays in school time, the record will show an unauthorised absence from the Academy. Parents will incur a fine of £60 per parent, per child, per week of absence for failing to ensure their child attends school.

### **Late Arrivals (arriving 35minutes after AM registration)**

Students arriving after 8.35am at the Academy must report to Reception to sign in and to receive their mark. Upon arrival the student will be given an unauthorised mark which will affect the student's overall attendance.

Students must bring a letter with them, from a parent, signed and dated, to explain or outline the reason for their child's late arrival at the Academy. If a letter is not a feasible option, parents must telephone the Academy and communicate the relevant details to Reception staff. Reception will inform ADO, HOY and Tutor. A text message, e-mail or any other form of digital, electronic messaging technology is not acceptable for this purpose. The Academy needs to verify the authenticity of the information received to ensure the safety of the student. When a student is deemed to be late, a lunch time detention will be issued.

### Registration and Registers

Registers are important legal documents therefore it is essential that registers accurately record the attendance of all students. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.40am by each form tutor and a mark will be made during the registration period for each student. The register will close at 9.00am. Afternoon registration will take place at 1:05pm.

In the absence of the Lesson Monitor system, a paper register must be completed and returned to ADO.

Students who arrive after on site 8:35am will be deemed late and will receive a lunch detention.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the Academy knows who is in the building. Students leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment or an interview), or returning to the Academy later in the day should report to Reception and sign in.

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from the Academy having previously registered for the session. This behaviour means the student will not be receiving full-time education and it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable. The Academy takes this very seriously and will communicate this information to the Form Tutor and Head of Year (HOY) or Head of Sixth Form.

If a student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the Academy will endeavour to make contact with parents/carers immediately. This will be done by a member of the Attendance Team. The Head of Year will be informed of the outcome.

## **Lesson Registration**

In order to track the whereabouts of a student throughout the day, deal with truancy and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take an electronic register within 10 minutes of the start of every lesson to record attendance or absence. The register will need to be updated if a student arrives late.

Where a teacher is absent, the Head of Faculty is responsible for ensuring that a register is completed by cover or supply staff.

## **Assembly Registration**

Paper registers will be complete by tutors in Year Assembly. Registers will be returned to Reception or the Attendance Office at 9:00am. Where a tutor is absent, the Head of Year is responsible for ensuring that a register is completed.

## Rewards

Regular rewards for good attendance will be Year based. Year Assemblies will acknowledge and reward Forms and individuals for their attendance in accordance with the following structure:

Platinum Award: 100% attendance  
Gold Award: 97% to 99% Silver Award: 96%  
Bronze Award: 95%

Heads of Year will maintain an attendance display in their Year area, reflecting high attendance. All Form rooms will display current attendance data.

Additionally, the Academy will facilitate awards for 100% attendance throughout the academic year and for complete academic terms. Heads of Year and tutors may also recommend students for special consideration awards in respect of improvements in attendance.

Vivos will be allocated to tutors and HOY for attendance.

Consistent attendance awards will reflect annual attendance figures and will be done on a whole school basis. Top attending students will be eligible for entry into a draw for a free end of year trip in Activities week or a free Prom ticket.

At a Year level, students with 95% attendance or better throughout the year will be eligible for an end of term prize.

Termly awards will be made to the Form with the best overall attendance.

A trophy will be awarded termly for the House with the best attendance figures. Tutors and HOY to make effective use of praise postcards to acknowledge improved attendance.

## Sanctions

The Academy has the right, under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 which amended section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to issue to parents, a penalty where they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at Joseph Leckie Academy. In this matter, the Academy seeks to work in partnership with the local authority to ensure due process is observed.

The Academy will invoke sanctions where parents of excluded students fail to ensure that their child is not found present in a public place during school hours in the first five days of their exclusion from the Academy without a justifiable reason.

Current sanctions include the use of penalty notices, a parenting order, an education supervision order, a school attendance order and prosecution.

#### Signing In/Out

When a student returns to the Academy or when arriving late, after attendance staff have left the main entrance, students will sign in at Reception. Reception staff will update attendance data on Sims, issue a signing in form and inform the tutor. Students retain the signing in form and will present it, on request, to any member of staff who challenges apparent lateness or truancy.

Students who need to leave the Academy during the school day must complete an entry in the Signing Out book in Reception. Students must bring a dated and signed letter from their parent/carer outlining the time and basic reason for their child to be out of school. This letter must be counter signed by HOY, Form Tutor or a member of the Leadership Team before signing out can take place. Reception staff will verify a student's identity and issue an Academy approved pass. Students must present this pass, on request, to verify that they have a legitimate reason for not being in school.

#### Truancy Call

Truancy Call (TC) will be activated between 10:00am and 11:00am. Truancy Call will be triggered by a student being recorded as absent from morning registration and lesson 1. Nil responses to TC will be followed up by telephone calls to parents, triggered by ADO with AIO and Reception support, if necessary.

#### Truancy

Truancy is the act of staying away from lessons, registration, assembly or detention for any reason other than with the express consent of a member of staff. Consent may be in the form of an out of lesson pass, a signed and dated note, an e-mail, a text message or verbal communication from a colleague. Consent may be provided either before or after the event. Truancy is detrimental to a student's education and leaves them vulnerable. All incidents of truancy will incur a sanction. See PBM Policy.

Use will be made of attendance data to identify students who attend registration or lessons and then truant subsequent lessons, registration periods, after school classes and detentions. Where a student is identified as being potentially truant, the Academy will make contact with the family, alert them to the prevailing situation and work with the family to locate the student. All such procedures or interventions must be logged and resolved, ensuring that the student is safe and that the family and the Academy have full knowledge of the circumstances of the original alert and of the final outcome.