



MacIntyre Academies Discovery Academy

Attendance Policy

Version	Purpose/Change	Responsibility	Date
1	New policy	Head of School/ Exec Principal	October 2022

Person Responsible: Executive Principal
Date of first draft: 2022
Date of staff consultation:
Date adopted by the LAB: October 2022
Date of implementation: November 2022
Date reviewed: N/a
Date of next review: October 2025

Introduction

Discovery Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. This is based on the belief that only by attending the academy regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The whole academy community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, carers, pupils and all school staff, as well as other professionals involved in pupils' lives.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Academy's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at Discovery have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils are able to learn and feel valued members of the learning community. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example with their own attendance and punctuality.

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. The attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveler absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Registers are completed at **9.00am** and **1.00pm**. Registers will “close” at **9.15am** and **1.15pm**.

Categorising Absence

A mark will be made in respect of each pupil during registration. Any pupil who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.

Under extreme circumstances, and as decided by the school, students may be placed on a temporary part time timetable. This will have an agreed start and end date lasting no more than 6 weeks. Students who are on a temporary agreed part time timetable will be marked according to their expected attendance detailed in their personalised plan.

Discovery administrative staff will amend the registers to indicate lateness if a pupil arrives after the register closes.

The academy recognises the clear links between attendance and progress, and attendance and safeguarding. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a pupil is clearly unwell, staff at Discovery will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Executive Principal / Head of School.**

Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
- a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion e.g. family wedding
 - in exceptional circumstances, where permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents or carers have sought permission in advance
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents and carers are encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control,
e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;

(f) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent or carer;
- the academy is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. waiting for the gas man;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission.

Children Missing in Education

- Where a learner has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Warwickshire County Council 's Education and Learning Business Unit at 01926 742036 or via e mail to cme@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk.

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

All contacts and outcomes will be recorded on the learner's file

Learners out of school for long periods of time due to ill health or injury

Our family Footings Team will work closely with families to support them find the most appropriate solution and work with other agencies to ensure that the learner receives an appropriate education during a long period of illness and/ or injury.(Please refer to the school's supporting children with medical needs policy for further information on how the school supports learners with medical needs)

Child Protection Concerns

If there are any child protection concerns these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps which may include sharing information with external agencies as appropriate.

Approved Educational Activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

Why attendance matters

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

When a learner's attendance falls below 90% they will be placed on an Attendance Action Plan unless their absence is related to a serious one off illness or an ongoing illness which requires them to attend regular medical appointments and /or hospitalization.

The Department for Education (DfE) published research in 2016 which found that:

- The higher the overall absence rate across Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4
- Pupils with no absence are 1.3 times more likely to achieve their end of KS4 targets
- Pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve a high level grade at the end of KS4.

Collection and Analysis of Data

A member of the school's office staff will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Executive Principal / Head of School who ensures that appropriate action is taken to improve attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to external agencies within the stipulated time frame. The Executive Principal / Head of School reports on attendance every term to the Local Advisory Board.

Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Pupil Attendance

1. On a daily basis office staff will go through the registers between 9.30 am and 10.00 and any absences will be noted. If no explanation has been received, school will attempt to contact the parent or carer.
2. If the child returns to school with no explanation of the absence from their parent or carer, a letter will be sent requesting this information.
3. If a pattern of concern re attendance is developing, the class team will speak to the parent or carer about their child's pattern of absences.
4. If there is no significant improvement, the Executive Principal / Head of School will contact the parents and carers and invite them into school to discuss attendance.
5. Once point 4 is reached the WCC ACE team should receive copies of all previous attempts made.

Parents' and Carers' Responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents and carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Discovery Academy.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".

(NB Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")

Discovery Academy expects parents and carers will:

- ensure their child(ren) attend the academy regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the academy to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents and carers will also be expected to:

- notify school by telephone (class team or main office) on the first day of any absence;
- ensure their child arrives at the academy on time, in uniform and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the academy, for example by attending parents' and carers' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their child's work and activities;
- contact the academy without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life. Discovery Academy will endeavour to support parents and carers to address their concerns.

Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings;
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly;
- regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development;
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy;
- schools and academies have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children;
- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others;
- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

Reviewing the Policy

The academy will review this policy each year.

Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been screened for potential adverse impact on specific groups within the school community. It is not believed that this policy will have any such adverse impact.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS and CARERS

1. When does my child need to be in school?

School opens for pupils at 8.40 a.m. Your child should be ready in good time for the school transport to ensure that they arrive on time.

2. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you.

If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year attendance report.

3. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness

- Dental/medical appointment (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays, wherever possible)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- **Exceptional** special occasions, eg a family wedding, where permission has been granted in advance using a Leave of Absence Request form
- Other **exceptional** circumstances, where permission has been granted in advance using a Leave of Absence Request form
- Attending an interview e.g. for college

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

4. What is unacceptable?

The academy reserves the right not to authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays.

5. Will the academy contact me if my child is absent?

We would expect a parent or carer to telephone the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year attendance report.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

6. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Try to make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

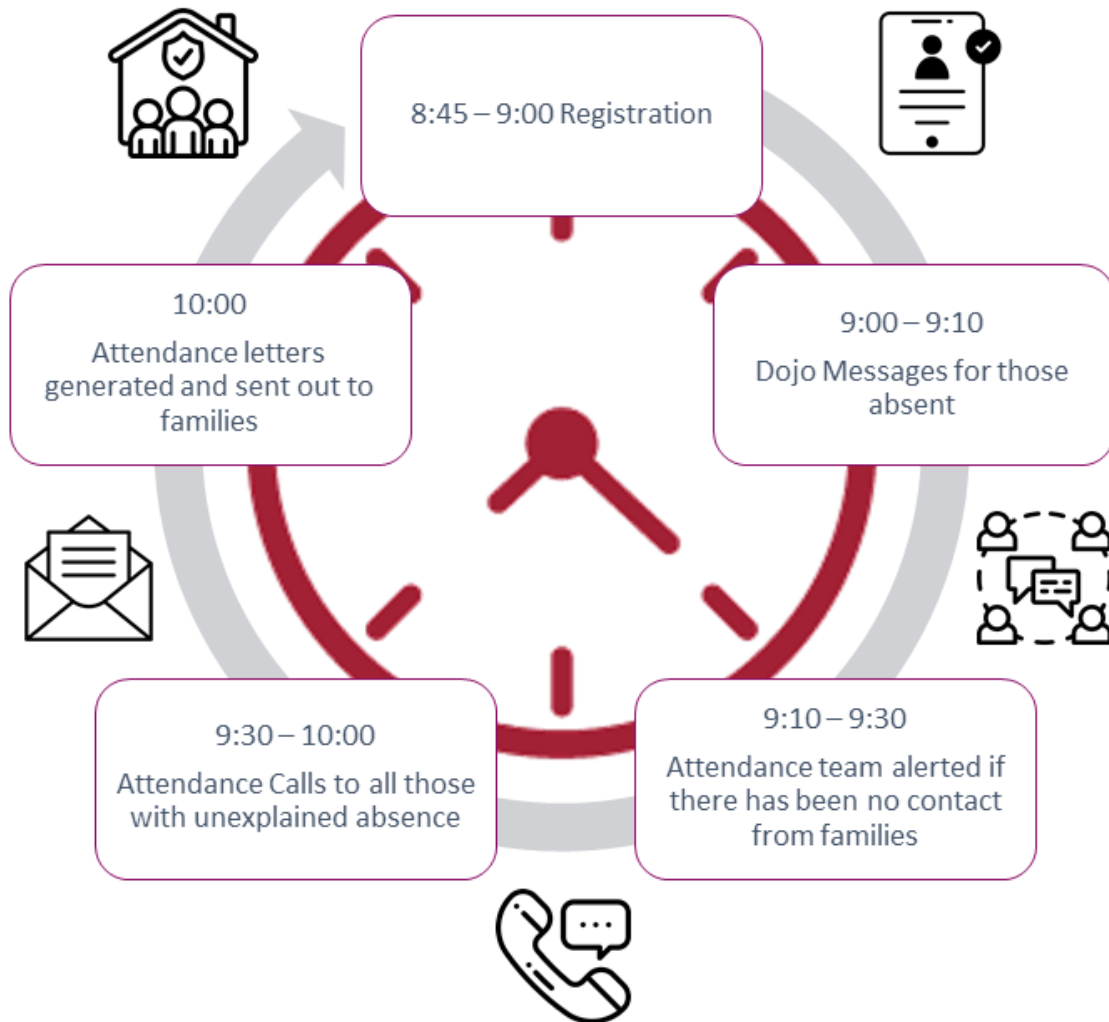
7. My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's teacher and openly discuss your worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to resolve the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with our Family Footings Team.

The school may also refer you for "early help" from an agency / support network that works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

Appendix (a)

Daily Attendance Timeline



Appendix (b)



Attendance Interventions

