The Blessed Peter Snow
Catholic Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

The Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust Mission Statement:

The five strands in our mission help us journey closer to Jesus. Through scripture and the sacraments, we are guided in our mission to provide opportunities for each person to have life and have it to the full.

Our pupils, staff and communities:

- Are encouraged to discover more about who they are within a supportive Catholic environment, so that by making our journeys together all may catch a glimpse of God

- Show respect and acceptance of each other, so that all feel welcomed and are thus prepared to take their place in a just and caring society

- Have the freedom and safety to find, recognise and celebrate all the gifts and talents, opportunities that lead to happiness

- Through knowing and celebrating success in all its forms during their time with us, lay the foundations for a successful life outside our Academies

- Thrive and grow in their work and learning, inspired to show curiosity and independence of thought

"God's glory is seen in a human being who is fully alive; and that life is truly full when the person catches a glimpse of God"
St Irenaeus (c.130 – 200)

Policy Document	Attendance Policy
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1. Policy statement

1.1. Improving attendance is everyone's business. Every child of compulsory academy age is entitled, by law, to receive full time education and it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child attends school. Attending school regularly is not only essential for them to achieve well in their learning but it also helps them with their social and emotional development and overall well-being. Attending school regularly gives children the best opportunity to have wider and better life chances.

1.2. The academy recognises that some children find it harder than others to attend school. The academy will always seek to work in partnership with parents to understand any barriers to attendance and provide support to address these. Small dips in attendance can lead to more significant attendance difficulties that are harder to overcome. Therefore, the academy will always intervene early to understand the needs of children and families and put the right support in place as soon as attendance falls below the expected standard.

1.3. The academy will expect high standards of attendance, monitor attendance data, listen to children and parents to understand barriers, provide support, formalising it when necessary, and enforce attendance through statutory intervention, only when all other avenues have been exhausted.

2. Legislation and guidance

2.1. This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance on attendance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance. Links to other relevant legislation and guidance can be found at Section 16.

2.2. A child must start full time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on the 31st December, 31st March or 31st August following their fifth birthday – whichever comes first. A child can leave full time education on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the school summer holidays. They must then do one of the following until they are 18:

- stay in full-time education, for example at a college.
- start an apprenticeship or traineeship.
- spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

3. Attendance and punctuality expectations

3.1. This academy expects children to be in school, on time, every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence. Attendance is often reported as a percentage. The following table shows how percentages equate to the number of days and lessons lost each year, how this would be graded and the type of support that would be put in place:

Attendance %	Academy days missed per year	Number of lessons missed per year	Attendance grading	Possible actions
100%	0	0	Outstanding	
98%	4	20	Very good	
96%	7	35	Good	Academy monitoring
95%	10	50	Almost there	Academy support
94%	11	55	Improvement needed	Academy support
90%	20	100	Concern	External support Referrals
85%	29	145	Serious concern	External support Referrals Penalty notices

3.2. When a child arrives late to the academy, even by a few minutes, they miss an important part of the school day, which can include learning time, assemblies and teacher instructions. Children can feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late and it can disrupt the learning of others. This table shows how frequent lates can add up to significant amount of lost learning:

Minutes late per day	Academy days lost per day	Number of lessons lost per year
5 minutes	**3**	**15 lessons**
10 minutes	**6**	**30 lessons**
15 minutes	**9**	**45 lessons**

4. The academy day

4.1. The following table sets out the times of the academy day:

Be in line up or classroom by	**(Time)**	**Child should enter academy, line up, or be in the classroom.**
Start of the academy day	**(Time)**	
Morning register begins	**(Time)**	**Child receives a 'late' (L) mark if absent when the register starts but arrives before it closes**
Morning register closes	**(Time)**	**Child receives an 'unauthorised absence' (U) mark if they arrive after the register closes**
Afternoon register begins at	**(Time)**	**Child receives a 'late' (L) mark if absent when the register starts but arrives before it closes**
Afternoon register closes	**(Time)**	**Child receives an 'unauthorised absence' (U) mark if they arrive after the register closes**
End of the academy day	**(Time)**	

5. Authorised and unauthorised absences

5.1. An absence is 'authorised' when the academy has either given permission in advance for the child to be absent or when the reason given for the absence is accepted and satisfactory.

5.2. In general, absence maybe authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical or dental appointments (see section 7 below)
- Religious observance, where the session or day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong. The academy may seek confirmation of this from the religious body. (Please note that pilgrimage or performing Umrah are not 'religious observance' days and are not considered reasonable cause for a child to miss school). 3 days are permitted within a 12 month period where a religion other than Christianity is practised.
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes where the parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the child is travelling with them. The academy may ask for proof that the family is required to travel for occupational purposes and if attendance falls below an acceptable level, the academy may consider attendance enforcement.
- Unavoidable cause when an emergency has prevented the child from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the child, not the parent.

5.3. An absence is 'unauthorised' when either no explanation has been given for a child's absence or when the explanation offered is not considered acceptable by the academy. This includes:

- Taking day trips or holidays (see 8.2 below).
- Absence to assist parents with caring responsibilities or assisting with translation.
- Absence when the reason is not considered acceptable or has not yet been established.
- Arriving late after the register has closed (see section 4.1)
- Leaving the academy during the academy day without permission (truancy).

6. Reporting a child's unplanned absence

6.1. If a child is absent, parents must:

- Contact the academy as early as possible, but before (time), on the first day of absence, either by telephone (Number) or email (email address).
- Call every day thereafter to advise the academy of the child's progress.
- Send a note in on the first day of the child's return with a reason for the absence (even if a telephone explanation has been given) or call into the academy in person and ask to speak with a member of staff

6.2. Absence due to physical or mental illness will be marked as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Where the absence is longer than 1 day or there are doubts about the authenticity of the

illness, the academy will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription or note from a pharmacist, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The academy will not ask for medical evidence without good reason.

6.3. If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents notified of this.

7. Reporting a child's planned absence

7.1. Wherever possible, all appointments should be made outside of the academy day. If this is not possible, parents should ensure that children are out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary e.g. if an appointment can only be arranged for 11am, a child should be in the academy both before and after the appointment, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

7.2. Planned absences for appointments should be reported to the academy as far in advance as possible by sending an email to (email address)

8. Leave of absence during term time

8.1. In accordance with the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance, there are very limited circumstances where the academy will grant a leave of absence during term time. These are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time limited part-time timetable (see section 17)
- **Exceptional circumstances**: the academy may grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances at their discretion. This must be requested in advance by a parent who the child normally lives with. The academy will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the academy to determine the length of time the child can be away from the academy.

8.2. The need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation is not an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised.

8.3. Leave of absence will not be granted for a child to take part in protest activity during academy hours.

9. Key contacts for attendance (please add or delete as appropriate)

Role	Name	Can support with:	Contact details
Senior Leader - Attendance		Attendance referrals to agencies, meetings to understand and support with barriers to attendance	
Academy attendance officer		Attendance referrals to agencies, meetings to understand and	
		support with barriers to attendance	
Designated safeguarding lead		Safeguarding	
SENDCO		Special educational needs and disabilities	
Senior Mental Health Lead		Mental health issues including emotionally based school avoidance	
Head of years		Timetables, behaviour, attendance and punctuality	
Form tutors/class teachers		Timetables, behaviour, attendance and punctuality	

10. Following up unexplained absence

10.1. Where any child the academy expects to attend does not, or stops attending without reason, the academy will:

- Call/text/parent mail/dojo the child's parent on the first morning of the first day of unexplained absence to find out the reason. At least two points of contact must be given to the academy for this purpose. If the academy cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, the academy may do a home visit or contact external agencies e.g police, social care.

- If after three days of absence the child has not been seen and contact has not been made with the academy, all reasonable enquiries will be made by the academy to establish contact with the parent of the child, including making enquiries to known friends and extended family. In addition, a home visit will be made, by attendance/pastoral teams, social worker, other agencies etc. to check the safety and wellbeing of the child and to find out the reason for absence.
- Children whom the academy assesses as being at greater risk of harm will receive safe and well checks on each day of absence. If a child has a social worker, the academy will notify them on the same day of any absence.
- Where a child has not returned to the academy for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent without authorisation for twenty consecutive academy days, they are considered to be 'Children Missing Education (CME)' (see Children Missing Education). The child may be removed from the academy admission register when the academy and local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child.

11. Safeguarding

11.1. Lack of consistent or regular attendance, erratic attendance or persistent and severe absence or children missing education (CME) are safeguarding issues and must act as a warning sign to a range of possible concerns including neglect, sexual abuse or child criminal exploitation (CCE) and serious violence. They may also be an indication of child-on-child abuse including bullying and sexual harassment or significant mental ill health concerns. They must not be seen as purely isolated attendance concerns.

11.2. Where children have or have had a social worker or need safeguarding, this will inform decisions about safeguarding support.

11.3. The academy is responsible for the safeguarding of children placed in alternative provision and for monitoring their attendance at alternative provision. This will follow the same process as for children attending the mainstream setting.

12. Promoting and rewarding good attendance

12.1. The academy has high standards of attendance and will work together with children and families to build a culture where children want to be in school, ready to learn. Improving attendance will always be a high priority of the academy.

12.2. The academy promotes good attendance to children through:

- Assemblies, tutor time, achievement points, rewards

12.3. The academy promotes good attendance to parents by:

- Texts, letters, phone calls, induction information, policy, website, drop ins etc.

12.4. The academy expects all children to have good attendance of 96% or better (equivalent to missing 7 academy days per year). It is recognised that some children may struggle to achieve this due to authorised absences e.g. for medical needs. Such absences will be taken into account when celebrating attendance.

12.5. Good or above average attendance will be celebrated by:

- Assemblies, tutor time, achievement points, rewards

12.6. The academy will use attendance data to identify any patterns of poor attendance so that barriers can be identified at the earliest opportunity and support put in place to prevent any issues worsening.

13. Attendance monitoring

13.1. The academy will use attendance data to identify any patterns of poor attendance so that barriers can be identified at the earliest opportunity and support put in place to prevent any issues worsening.

13.2. Weekly attendance will be monitored and analysed to see if there are any patterns or trends in the data that need further investigation and targeted support will be provided. The analysis will be shared with relevant staff e.g. class teachers, form tutors, heads of year, SENCO, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who will be expected to explore any issues with individual children and provide appropriate support.

13.3. The attendance of groups of children (e.g. year groups, boys and girls, children with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)), will be monitored and analysed by the academy at least half termly, termly and annually across the academy. This data will be compared with local, regional and national levels to identify any areas of focus for improvement, and a report shared with the governing body.

14. Reducing severe or persistent absence

14.1. Persistent absence (PA) is when a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence (SA) is when a child misses 50% or more of school. For both PA and SA, the absence can be for both authorised and unauthorised reasons or a mixture of both.

14.2. PA and SA will always be regarded as a significant concern. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. It also means they miss out on important aspects of social and emotional development that contribute to their overall wellbeing and can be an indication of a safeguarding risk.

14.3. The academy will use attendance data to identify those children who are at risk of becoming PA and intervene early to identify barriers to good attendance. Strategies may include:

- Attendance meetings
- Referrals to other agencies
- Education Welfare Officers (EWO)

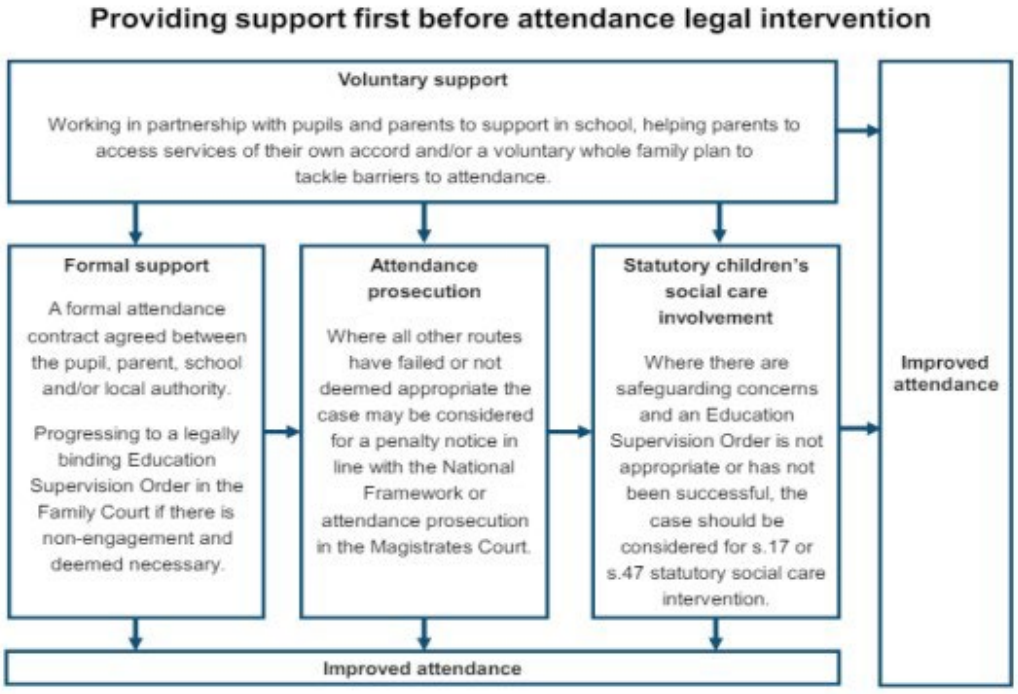
14.4. If a child meets the threshold for persistent absence, the academy will work in partnership with parents and the child to agree a voluntary early help plan. This may include referrals to and support from external services. Strategies may include: Attendance challenge, meetings, referral to external agencies, EWO, local authority referrals.

14.5. If a child meets the threshold for severe absence, the academy will intensify its support strategies. This will include referrals to and support from external services. Strategies may include: Attendance challenge, meetings, referral to external agencies, EWO, local authority referrals and formal procedures.

14.6. Children who are persistently or severely absent will be prioritised for support. The academy understands that absence is often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing and will always seek to understand these barriers and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects children's right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts. In addition, individual cases may be referred to Children's Social Care. Attendance legal intervention will only be used as a last resort and after all other avenues have been exhausted.

15. Legal intervention

15.1. This diagram sets out how the academy may progress to legal interventions once all other support strategies have been exhausted. In making any decision to use legal interventions, the academy will always consider the individual circumstances of a family on a case-by-case basis.



15.2. In some circumstances, the academy may feel it is appropriate to use an attendance contract. An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the academy or the local authority. It is not legally binding but allows a more formal written agreement to support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked. An attendance contract is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Further

details on attendance contracts can be found in Working together to improve school attendance.

15.3. If an attendance contract is agreed but the parent does not comply with its contents, the academy and local authority may proceed to an alternative course of action including legally binding interventions (Education Supervision Order) and ultimately a prosecution. Again, this will always be a last resort after every attempt has been made to secure engagement.

15.4 An Education Supervision Order (ESO) is heard in Family Court. If granted, the order is for 12 months with the option of renewing for an additional 24 months. The parent will be assigned a Supervising Officer who will oversee the order; and the pupil will be assigned a Befriender to advise, assist and guide the pupil.

15.5

16. National Framework for penalty notices

16.1. Penalty notices can be issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where a child's absence is recorded as unauthorised and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. Penalty notices can only be issued by the principal, or someone authorised by them, a local authority officer or the police.

16.2. While there is a national threshold for when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice, the academy has a duty to consider each case individually in deciding whether this is an appropriate course of action.

16.3. The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

16.4. A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification (such as a medical appointment) during a fixed period of exclusion or permanent exclusion. If that pupil is seen in a public place, a penalty notice will be issues to each parent of each child. This is for £80 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

16.5. In deciding whether to issue a penalty notice, the academy will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether this is the best tool to improve attendance or whether alternatives may be more appropriate. They will also consider any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as when the child has a disability.

16.6 At the first offence a penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child. This is for £80 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If a further penalty notice occurs within a 3-year period a penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child for £160 if paid within 28 days.

16.7 Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.

16.8 Repeated offences of unauthorised leave of absence may result in the matter being directly prosecuted in Magistrates Court. Prosecution is heard in Magistrates Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and you will receive a criminal record. Additionally, other community orders may be attached.

17. Supporting children with specific needs

17.1**.** Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these children are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future

17.2. However, some children face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include children who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other child and therefore the attendance ambition for these children is the same as it is for any other child, but additional support may need to be provided.

17.3. This support will include:

- Understanding the individual needs of the child and family.
- Working in partnership with the child and family to put in-school support in place and working with the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available).
- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs

17.4 A sickness return to the local authority will be made for any child recorded in the attendance register as unable to attend because of sickness and there are reasonable grounds to believe the child will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the child's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

17.5 In some cases, it may be appropriate to consider whether a time-limited phased return to the academy should be used to support children who are affected by anxious feelings about school attendance (see section 18).

17.6 For children with SEND, the academy will work in partnership with parents to reduce any barriers to attendance. This may include providing support or reasonable adjustments, working together with nursing services and mental health support teams or other external services.

17.7 If a child has an education, health and care plan (EHCP), the academy will communicate with the local authority where a child's attendance becomes a concern, or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the child's needs.

17.8 Children with other vulnerabilities, such as those who have the involvement of a social worker, are looked after or previously looked after, are young carers or who are experiencing social barriers such as lack of housing and poverty, will also be provided with additional support that may include the assistance of a range of external agencies. The academy will work in partnership with the child and families to agree the package of support that is most helpful.

18. Part time timetables

18.1. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a child's best interests, there may be a need for the academy to provide a child of compulsory school age with less than fulltime education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a child from attending school or another setting full-time, and a part-time timetable is used to help the child access as much education as possible and as part of a reintegration package.

18.2. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage a child's behaviour

18.3. Part time timetables will be in place for the shortest time necessary and, unless there are exceptional circumstances, last no longer than 6 weeks. Formal written reviews will take place at least fortnightly and will include the child, parents and other professionals as appropriate.

18.4. The principal (or another member of the senior leadership team authorised by them) will agree all part-time timetables. A lead member of staff with responsibility for monitoring the part -time timetable will be agreed, and they will provide information and updates to other relevant members of staff in the academy e.g. SENCO, DSL, pastoral team, as well as liaising closely with parents and the child.

18.5. A written agreement/plan between the academy, the child and the parent will be drawn up. It will record the details of the timetable including the proposed end date and responsibilities for safeguarding and review dates. Records of all review meetings will be added to the plan.

18.6. Where the child has a social worker, the academy will keep them informed and involved in the process.

18.7. If the child has an EHCP, the academy will discuss the part time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

19. Roles and responsibilities

19.1. The trustees and governors are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust and academy policies and ethos
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust and academy
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

19.2. The head teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the academy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual children
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies Issuing penalty notices, where necessary

19.3. The attendance lead is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence
- Using absence data to track and monitor whole school attendance and identify children or cohorts that require support
- Devising strategies to address poor attendance and remove any barriers
- Building relationship with parents and external agencies to discuss and address attendance issues
- Creating intervention and reintegration plans in partnership with children, parents and external agencies
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families

19.4. The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Checking the daily attendance register
- Carrying out first day communication and subsequent daily absence calls
- Co-ordinating safe and well checks and home visits
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data

- Benchmarking attendance data against local, regional and national data to identify areas of focus for improvements
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns to the senior attendance champion and principal
- Working with the local authority to address persistent or severe absence
- Advising the principal or other authorised leader when to issue penalty notices and prosecution

19.5. Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and implementing any agreed strategies when there is a concern
- Rewarding good attendance – achievement points
- Attendance challenge

19.6. Admin/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a daily basis and recording it on the academy system
- Transferring calls from parents to an appropriate member of staff who can provide them with more detailed support on attendance

19.7. Parents are responsible for:

- Making sure their child attends the academy every day on time
- Calling the academy to report their child's absence before 8am on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence
- Providing the academy with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensuring that, wherever possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day
- Only requesting a leave of absence in advance and only for exceptional circumstances
- If appropriate, inform and work with the academy to address any issues with attendance at the earliest opportunity

19.8. Children are responsible for:

- Attending school every day on time
- Attending every timetabled session on time

20. Additional guidance and legislation

20.1. Relevant legislation:

- The Education Act 1996 and 2002
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2004
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (information about individual pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons act 1933 and 1963
- The Equity Act 2010

20.2. Relevant government guidance:

- Children Missing Education
- Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Elective Home Education
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Providing remote education