



The Attic Attendance Policy

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Date presented to Management Committee	July 2017
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Date for review	July 2018

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Attic Learning Centre is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all young people and recognises this can be achieved by supporting and promoting attendance and punctuality and supporting young people to take advantage of education and opportunities to them now and in the future.**
- 1.2 Everyone connected to the Attic - young people/parents/carers and all staff have a responsibility for ensuring good attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to ensure everyone knows what part they can play in this.**
- 1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. Parents and carers have had an opportunity to voice their opinions. The Attic will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.**

2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All Young People on the Admission Register at The Attic Learning Centre are, by the 1994 Education Act, required to attend Attic according to their individual attendance programme. This will have been carefully worked out in negotiation between Attic, the parents/guardian, the pupil and any other professionals involved and is reviewed on a regular basis.**

Many Young People at The Attic learning centre have experienced difficulties over attending educational provision in the past. The Attic is clear that poor attendance negatively affects educational achievement, undermines the well being of all Young People and could affect access to work, training and further education post 16.

All staff both teaching and support have a role to play in promoting attendance by providing an environment where Young People's educational, social and personal development needs are taken into account and where Young People feel valued and safe. Commitment, attendance and punctuality are key factors in future successes and much emphasis is placed on this at The Attic. If pupils can build up a regular pattern of education attendance this will help them considerably as they move into the outside world. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

- 2.2 Attendance is overseen, directed and coordinated by the Headteacher.**

2.3 Registration

The Attic is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session.

- i) The morning session starts at 9.00am and the register will be called at 09.15. The register will also be called during the afternoon session which starts at 12:25 and a mark will be made in respect of each young person.
- ii) The registers will close 30 minutes after the start of the session but may be held open due for particular reasons e.g. taxi late due to weather etc. Any young person who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Young people who arrive before the register closes will be counted present but will be dealt with under Attic's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 4.4).
- iii) NB Although Attic starts at 9.00am because there is no area for young people to wait outside Attic (no playground and Attic discourages having young people outside Attic due to local residents and no staff available to supervise before 9.00am due to staff briefings. Young people who travel by bus/taxi cannot arrive before 9.00am so we need to have an arrival margin.

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each young person during registration. Any young person who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by Attic in advance or the reason for the absence is already known and accepted by Attic as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by Attic at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction is distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.
- ii) The Attic recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding young people. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a young persons education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render young people extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a young person is clearly unwell, staff at The Attic will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their young person absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a young person's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with The Attic.
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the Attic within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised and the Education Welfare Officer may be informed.
- iv) Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- a) Where leave has been granted by Attic in advance, for example -
- A pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a license has been granted by the Local Authority
 - A pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the young persons overall pattern of attendance will be considered.
- b) Where The Attic is satisfied that the young person is too ill to attend.
- c) Where the young person has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their young person immediately afterwards – or send him/her to Attic 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 young person's parent belongs.
- f) The young person lives more than the required distance away (currently 3 miles) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority.
- g) In other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) for a limited period.
- v) 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.
 - Attic is not satisfied with the explanation.
 - The young person is staying home to mind the house.
 - The young person is shopping during school hours.
 - The young person is absent for unexceptional reasons e.g. a birthday.
 - The young person is absent from Attic on a family holiday
 - The young person has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a young person is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, The Attic will check attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Attendance in Lessons

All the young people who attend The Attic are known and recognised by all staff. Group sizes are small. All staff attends the registration periods at the start of the morning and

afternoon sessions and knows exactly who should be in their sessions. As a result of this it is not necessary for formal class registers to be taken at the start of each lesson but if an expected young person isn't in a session this is followed up immediately. If the young person cannot be located on the premises or a pupil leaves the premises without permission the following procedure comes into operation:

- If the family of the young person is on the telephone a telephone call will be made to inform parents of the situation.
- All other professionals will be contacted.
- If the family cannot be contacted by phone a home visit will be made and if still no contact made then a letter will be left advising of situation and requesting contact as a matter or urgency.
- If necessary a letter will be sent out to parents/carers at home address.
- Once contact has been made with the parent/carers they will be made aware of how seriously Attic views a situation where a pupil absents themselves from The Attic premises.
- Once initial information has been obtained as to reasons behind the absence appropriate action will be taken which may include a meeting to discuss and negotiate a way forward.

If a pupil is absent from a lesson and located on the premises, they will be asked as to why they took that particular course of action and further discussion will take place with the pupil and staff. If appropriate the parents/carers will be informed.

3. Collection and analysis of data

3.1 The Headteacher will ensure attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported on as appropriate.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 The Attic has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week.

4.2 First-day calling

The Attic has in place a system of first day calling.

- a) If the family is on the telephone a telephone call will be made – depending on the outcome of the telephone conversation a home visit may be undertaken straight away...`
- b) If the family is not on the telephone or there is no reply or where professional judgement suggests it, a home visit may be undertaken straight away.
- c) If contact cannot be made as a result of nobody answering the door, a letter will be left, addressed to the parent/guardian asking them to contact The Attic as a matter or urgency.
- d) If the home visit enables contact to be made, the visiting staff assesses the situation and in their professional opinion decides whether the absence is a genuine absence (condones absence is not always viewed as genuine absence). If it is not seen to be genuine then the parents and pupil are counselled with a view to the pupil returning to Attic with the member of staff.

4.3 Attic strategies to tackle absence

If absence is frequent or continuous and except where a young person is clearly unwell staff at The Attic will challenge parents/carers about the need and reasons for their young person's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note of explanation from a Young Person's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with The Attic.

Attendance/punctuality issues are always discussed with other involved professionals as appropriate and may be set as a target at the an Individual Learning Plan Review Meeting held at least Termly or more often as appropriate ,or a LAC/CIN meeting . A CAF will be offered to parents/carers as appropriate to support family and hence attendance.

Other interventions to support attendance (since Jan 15)

- Persistent absence now set at less than 90% - this may trigger a fast track referral. Set over a four week period.
- Attendance Alert to all parents/carers
- After 6 unauthorised absences a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. This will be £60 per parent; please note, the Head teacher reserves the right to issues a fixed term penalty notice after 1 session of unauthorised absence.
- Key workers in place

Where a pupil is absent without explanation from school for a period of time (in line with the young person's risk assessment) The Attic will inform the Educational Welfare Office.

If a young person is absent for 20 days with no contact the school will inform the Children Missing Education Team.

4.4 Referral to the education welfare service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the young person is failing to attend Attic at all), the matter will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service. This may result in

- A Fixed Penalty Notice
- A Supervision Order
- Fast Track to prosecution
- Prosecution
- A fine
- A custodial sentence

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Young people are expected to arrive at Attic, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class if they are late.

A young person who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other any other young person with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.

4.6 Young people that arrive late for Attic but before register closes will be dealt with as appropriate taking into account the circumstances.

4.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that Attic knows who is in the building. All Young People must sign in on entering the building and sign out on leaving the building.

4.8 For the same reason it is important that young people leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to Attic later in the day sign out and in.

4.9 Study leave

At The Attic Study leave before GCSE exams is not given and the young people are expected to attend Attic until year 11 leavers date (last Friday in June). Any session given to pupils as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence. If leave is given for a particular circumstance it is not an 'approved educational activity' as it's unsupervised.

4.9 Term-time Leave of Absence

From September 1st 2013 any parent wishing to take their child out of school during term time must complete an Exceptional leave of Absence form which is available from the school office.

Term-time holidays are not authorised unless in exceptional circumstances. Each case is dealt with individually and will involve a consultation with other involved professionals.

Any request is likely to be declined.

Parents/carers responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring young people receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of the young person), who will be supported and encouraged by the Attic.

The Attic expects parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend Attic regularly.
- Support their young person's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum.

Parent/carers will also be expected to:

- **Notify Attic on the first day of absence. Attic recognises that some parents cannot make calls to Attic but Attic expects parents/carers to ensure they answer their phone when Attic makes contact or respond to texts.**
- **Ensure their young person arrives at Attic on time.**
- **Work in partnership with Attic, for example attending parents meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their young persons work and activities.**
- **Contact Attic without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their young person's life. Attic will always support parents to address their concerns.**

A Guide for Parents is attached.

Young person's responsibilities

All young people should be aware of the importance of regular attendance at Attic. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending Attic regularly, they should speak to staff or other professionals involved, who can speak to Attic on their behalf.

Young people should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from Attic they should pass on any notes from their parents to explain the absence. Young people also have a responsibility for following Attic procedures if they arrive late.

A guide for young people is attached.

ATTENDING ATTIC REGULARLY

A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ATTENDING REGULARLY AND ON TIME

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Attic. It will help you:

- **Keep up with your academic work and get the best results you can.**
- **Get a job – employers like people that are reliable.**

Remember, your attendance at Attic is shown in any references/record of achievement.

ABSENCES

Acceptable reasons for absence include:

- **Illness**
- **Emergency dental/medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays).**
- **Day of religious observance.**
- **Family bereavement**
- **Attending an interview for a job, college, university etc.**

Looking after brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping out are NOT reasons to be absent from Attic.

You will need a note from your parents to explain ALL absences from Attic. You will also need a note if you arrive at school after 9.05 in the morning. If you do not bring a note, or the explanation on the note is unsatisfactory, the absence will count as unauthorised and will be shown on your end of year report.

NEED HELP?

Problems with academic work?

Are you being bullied?

Are your friends giving you a hard time?

Are things difficult at Attic?

Are things difficult at Home?

You may feel that missing Attic is the answer. It is NOT – it may even make things worse.

TALK TO SOMEONE – Attic member of staff, your parents/carers or other professional that you work with. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my young person need to be in Attic?

Your young person should be in Attic in good time for registration. The morning register will be called usually at 09.15 and the afternoon register at 13.15. Although Attic starts at 09.00 (with breakfast in the hall) it is recognised that young people arriving by taxi or public transport may not arrive exactly on time. Early arrival is discouraged as Attic does not have facilities for young people to wait either outside or in the building and staff are not available to supervise before 09.00.

2. What happens if my young person is late?

Registration finishes at 9.30am in the morning and 12.30pm in the afternoon.

If your young person arrives between 9.15am and 9.30am in the morning he/she will be marked **late**

If your young person arrives after 9.30 am he/she will be marked as **absent**

If your young person arrives after 12.15pm he/she will be marked as **late**

If your young person arrives after 12.30pm he/she will be marked as **absent**

3. Does Attic need letters explaining my young person's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone Attic on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone 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.

4. What reason will Attic accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays).
- Day of religious observance.
- Family bereavement
- Attending an interview for a job, college, university etc.

Attic will always discuss with involved professionals to gather information before making decisions.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask permission for your child to miss Attic well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to provide a medical certificate. Attic will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers/sisters etc.

5. Will Attic contact me if my young person is absent?

The Attic operates a first day response to absences: We will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your young persons safety as well as their regular Attic attendance.

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

6. What can I do to encourage my young person to attend Attic?

Make sure your young person gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Show your young person by your interest, that you value his/her education by attending meetings and having regular contact with Attic staff.

7. My young person is trying to avoid coming to Attic. What should I do?

Contact Attic immediately and openly to discuss your worries. Your young person could be avoiding Attic for a number of reasons – difficulties with work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your young person's reluctance to attend Attic and work together to tackle the problem.

8. What Happens if my young person will not attend?

We will work with you to support you – with home visits, referral to other agencies. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your young person's difficulties with another professional who is working with your child or family. Attic may suggest that a CAF is undertaken which may be a way of you and your child being able to get some help and support.

If absence continues to be a problem a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service and this may result in

- A Fixed Penalty Notice
- A Supervision Order
- Fast Track to prosecution
- Prosecution
- A fine
- A custodial sentence

Attic strategies to tackle absence

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