



# The Attic Attendance Policy

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<b>Named Manager</b>	Andrew Aalders Dunthorne

# The Attic Attendance Policy

## Contents

1. Introduction
  2. Roles and responsibilities
  3. Collections and analysis of data
  4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance
  5. A guide for parents and carers
- Appendices
- Appendix 1. Attendance codes

## Links

### **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/pupil-attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-from-education/>

### **Penalty Notices**

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/pupil-attendance-and-welfare/school-attendance-and-penalty-notice/>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Attic Pupil Referral Unit is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all Students and recognises this can be achieved by supporting and promoting attendance and punctuality and supporting Students to take advantage of education and opportunities to them now and in the future.
- 1.2 Students/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. The Attic will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 All Students on the Admission Register at The Attic Pupil Referral Unit 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/Carer, the Student and any other professionals involved and is reviewed on a regular basis.

Many Students at The Attic 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 Students 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 every Student's educational, social and personal development needs are taken into account and where every Student feels valued and safe. Commitment, attendance and punctuality are key factors in future successes and much emphasis is placed on this at The Attic. If Students 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 The Headteacher gives delegated responsibility to the Deputy Headteacher to oversee, direct and coordinate attendance.
- 2.3 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.

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- Hillside –Morning registration 09:30, afternoon registration KS3 12:35 and KS4 13:20.
- Walpole – Morning registration 09:00, afternoon registration 13:25

- Landing – Morning registration 09:15, afternoon registration 13:00
- Dragonfly – Morning registration 09:30, afternoon registration 13:30

- ii) The registers will close 30 minutes after the start of the session but may be held open due to particular reasons e.g. taxi late due to weather etc. Any Student who arrives after the closing of the register will be marked absent. Any Student who arrives before the register closes will be marked present but will be marked with a late (L) code. (please refer to paragraph 4.4).
- iii) NB There is no area for Students to wait outside Attic and there is not the facility to supervise Students before the designated start time at each site, due to staff briefings. Therefore, Students are encouraged not to arrive before the designated start time.

#### 2.4 Categorising absence

- i) An attendance mark will be made for each Student during registration. Any Student who is not present at this time will be marked with an unauthorised absence code 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. The decision to authorise or unauthorise any absence rests with the Headteacher.
- ii) The Attic recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding Students. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a Student's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to Parents and Carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable which could potentially expose Students to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a Student is clearly unwell, The Attic will contact Parents and Carers to discuss the reasons for absence and offer support to ensure that attendance improves. A note or explanation from a Student's Parent or Carer does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision to authorise an absence will always rest with The Headteacher.
- iii) If a satisfactory explanation about an absence is not received by the Attic within 10 school days, the absence will remain unauthorised and the Education Welfare Officer may be informed.
- iv) Absences may be authorised in exceptional circumstances:
  - a) Where leave has been granted by Attic in advance, for example:
    - A Student is to participate in an approved performance for which a license has been granted by the Local Authority
    - A Student is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the Student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.
  - b) Where The Attic is satisfied that the Student is too ill to attend.
  - c) Where the Student has a medical appointment, although Parents and Carers are encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and where this is

not possible, endeavour to support their child in attending Attic before or after the appointment. Parents and Carers need to provide an appointment card or letter where possible.

- d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control.
- e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the Student's Parent or Carer belongs.
- f) The Student 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 or Carer.
  - Attic is not satisfied with the explanation.
  - The Student is staying home to support in some way at home.
  - The Student is shopping during school hours.
  - The Student is absent for unexceptional reasons e.g. a birthday.
  - The Student is absent from Attic on a family holiday
  - The Student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable or the Parent or Carer is unable to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

## 2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a Student 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. Parents and Carers Responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring Students 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 day to day care of the child), who will be supported and encouraged by the Attic.

The Attic expects Parents and Carers will:

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

Parent and Carers will also be expected to:

- Notify Attic on each and every day of absence except in the case of a communicable disease.
- Ensure their child arrives at Attic on time.
- Work in partnership with Attic, for example attending Parent and Carer meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their child's work and activities.

- Contact Attic without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's life. Attic will always support Parents and Carers to address their concerns.

Please see the guide for Parents and Carers on page 9.

### *2.7. Students Responsibilities*

All Students 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.

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

## **3. Collection and Analysis of Data**

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

## **4. Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance**

### *4.1 Child Missing in Education (CME)*

If a Student is absent for 20 days with no contact the school will inform the Children Missing Education (CME) Team.

- 4.2 The Attic has in place a system for each day of absence.

- A telephone call will be made to the primary contact and if we are not able to speak to someone a call will then be made to the secondary contact. Parents and Carers need to ensure that contact details are up to date.
- If there is no reply or where professional judgement suggests it, a home visit may be undertaken straight away.
- If contact cannot be made during a home visit, a letter will be left, addressed to the Parent or Carer asking them to contact The Attic as a matter of urgency and informing them that Social Services may be informed.
- If the home visit enables contact to be made, the visiting staff will assess the situation and decide whether the absence is a genuine absence. If it is not seen to be genuine then the Parent or Carer will be encouraged to send the Student to school with the member of staff.
- On the third day of absence if no contact has been made we may request that police carry out a welfare check.

### *4.3 Strategies to Reduce Absence*

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

Attendance and punctuality issues are always discussed with other involved professionals as appropriate and may be set as a target at the Pupil Action Plan (PAP) Review Meeting held each half term, or more often as appropriate, or a Child in Care (CIC) meeting, or a Child in Need (CIN) meeting. A CAF may be offered to Parents or Carers if further support is needed.

### ***Other interventions to support attendance***

- ***Fast Track***  
Persistent absence, which is attendance less than 90% may trigger a fast track referral. This is initiated by the Attic and implemented by the Educational Welfare Office (EWO). A Fast track is a monitoring process carried out over a number of weeks.
- ***Penalty Notice***  
Following 6 unauthorised absences (equivalent to 3 school days, that do not have to be consecutive) a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued. This will be £60 per parent; please note, the Headteacher reserves the right to issues a fixed term penalty notice after 1 session of unauthorised absence.
- ***Key Worker Support***  
Each student has a Key Worker who will be a regular and consistent contact for the Parent or Carer and support the Student to attend regularly. This could be by identifying barriers to non-attendance and helping to remove the barriers or supporting the Student to work around the barriers.
- ***Communication with Parents and Carers***
  - i) A letter notifying Parent or Carer of absence with no reason given, to give Parent or Carer the opportunity to notify The Attic with the reason for absence, so that the register can be amended. If no reason given after 10 school days since the absence, the unauthorised absence code 'O' will be used.
  - ii) A letter notifying parent/carer when a young person has been late on 5 occasions.
  - iii) Concern over patterns of absence or a drop in attendance may result in a letter of concern being sent to Parent or Carer
  - iv) A letter requesting a Parent or Carer meeting if there is no improvement in attendance.
  - v) A letter informing Parent or Carer that there has been no improvement in attendance and a referral has been made to EWO.
  - vi) Information available to Students on all sites regarding the importance of good attendance.
  - vii) Letters sent home informing Parent or Carer of 100% attendance each term and of improved attendance.
  - viii) Letter stating that no more absence will be authorised as illness or medical without medical evidence.
- ***Information to Students***
  - i) Information boards providing information about attendance and the importance of good attendance are visible on all sites.
  - ii) The reward system is in place to encourage good attendance.

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

#### 4.4 ***Referral to the Education Attendance Service***

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

- A Penalty Notice
- A Supervision Order
- Fast Track to prosecution
- Prosecution
- A fine
- A custodial sentence
- Prevention meeting (early intervention meeting)

#### 4.5 ***Lateness and punctuality***

Students 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 Student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be open to the same strategies as any other Student with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.6 Parents or Carers will be notified if Students arrive late for Attic but before register closes and any supporting strategies will be implemented.

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

4.8 For the same reason it is important that Students 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 before GCSE exams for Year 11 as a whole is not given and Students are expected to attend Attic until year 11 leavers date (***last Friday in June***). Any session given to Students as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence. If leave is given for this particular circumstance it is not an 'approved educational activity' as it's unsupervised.

#### 4.9 ***Term-time Leave of Absence***

From September 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

Each case is dealt with individually and will involve a consultation with other involved professionals.

Any request is likely to be declined.



## 5. A Guide for Parents

### Will Attic contact me if my child 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 child's safety as well as their regular Attic attendance.

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

### What can I do to encourage my child to attend Attic?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Support your child by showing your interest, that you value their education by attending meetings and having regular contact with Attic staff.

### My child is trying to avoid coming to Attic. What should I do?

Contact Attic immediately and openly to discuss your worries. Your child 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 child's reluctance to attend Attic and work together to tackle the problem.

### What Happens if my child 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 child'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 Penalty Notice
- A Supervision Order
- Fast Track to prosecution
- Prosecution
- A fine
- A custodial sentence
- A Prevention meeting

### Who should I contact if I have other questions about attendance?

Diane Chester – Deputy Headteacher [diane.chester@theatticpru.org.uk](mailto:diane.chester@theatticpru.org.uk)

Sophie Ball – Assistant Headteacher at Hillside [Sophie.ball@theatticpru.org](mailto:Sophie.ball@theatticpru.org)

Sally Erb – Assistant Headteacher at Walpole [sally.erb@theatticpru.org](mailto:sally.erb@theatticpru.org)

Nicola Coman – Assistant Headteacher at the Landing [Nicola.coman@theatticpru.org.uk](mailto:Nicola.coman@theatticpru.org.uk)

Louise Weddle – Education Manager at Dragonfly [lou.weddle@theatticpru.org.uk](mailto:lou.weddle@theatticpru.org.uk)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Attendance Codes

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM **
\	Present PM **
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present **
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site ( NOT dual registration) **
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) - NOT counted in possible attendances **
J	Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview **
P	Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity **
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip **
W	Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience **
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided

X	Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances **
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances **
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances **