Primary Attendance and Absence Policy

Ocean Academy

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A. Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Statement of intent

Ocean Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The academy's Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer is Mrs Richardson. Mrs Richardson can be contacted via **office@ocean-aspirations.org**. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behavior, Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Children With Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the academy.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the academy's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring all relevant staff have attendance training that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the academy's Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the academy.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the Senior Attendance Champion role to work alongside the attendance officer.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the academy's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Senior Attendance Champion and the attendance officer are responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil's name being deleted from the admission register unless exceptions apply.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the academy with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the academy if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any advice provided by the school to improve attendance

4. Attendance expectations

The academy has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every timetabled lesson.

The school day will start at **8:50am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8:50am**. Pupils will have a morning break at **10:10/10:30am**, which will last until **10:30/10:50am**, and a lunch break at **12:10/12:35pm**, which will last until **12:35/1:00pm** – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked at **8:50am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by the end of the registration period. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:20am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked at **1:00pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:10pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

1. 5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the main office via telephone before **8:50am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the academy by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent via **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend school.

The academy will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** school days in a row, or more than **10** school days in **one term**, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Senior Lead Attendance Champion / attendance officer. The academy will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **85 percent**, the attendance officer may arrange a formal meeting with the pupil and their parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the academy will

remove the pupil from the admissions register if the academy and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Attendance register

Ocean Academy uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The academy will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = Planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
- C1 = Leave of absence granted by the school for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- S = Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- T = Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- N = Reason not yet provided
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- D = Dual registered at another school
- B = Attending any other approved educational activity
- J1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- K = Attending education provision arranged by the LA
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Q = Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- W = Work experience
- X = Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

- Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5 = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Prospective pupil not on admission register

When the academy has planned in advance to be fully closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the academy has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from the academy but are receiving remote education for any reason will still be marked as absent in the register using the most appropriate absence code.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

The academy will share its daily attendance data with the DfE directly from the management information system.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for six years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the principal – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the principal, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The principal's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the academy will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The academy will only grant a pupil a leave of absence **in exceptional circumstances**. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, we will expect parents to contact the principal **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the principal will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from the academy. The academy is **not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays**.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the academy, unless certain exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The academy cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the academy in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid and unpaid work

The academy will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the academy's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the academy for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the academy. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the principal to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The principal will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **96 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the principal will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Pupils subject to a part-time timetable

In very exceptional circumstances and where it is in a pupil's best interests, the academy will grant leave of absence to accommodate for a pupil on a part-time timetable. In such circumstances, the days and times which the pupil is expected to attend the academy will be agreed in advance.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** advance.

The academy will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The academy will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The academy may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parent travelling for occupational purposes (GRT absence)

If a pupil is travelling with their parent as a result of the parent's trade or business and is therefore unable to attend, the academy will assure itself that this is a genuine reason. Proof will not be sought without genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. The parent will be encouraged to ensure that the pupil can attend a school where they are travelling to, and be dual registered at that school.

8. SEND and health-related absences

The academy recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the academy will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The academy will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the academy has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health.

If a pupil is unable to attend the academy for long periods of time due to their health, we will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.

- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about academy events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The academy will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the academy will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Absence in exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- There is a lack of access arrangements.
- Transport normally provided is not available and the academy is not within walking distance.
- There is widespread disruption to travel.
- Part of the academy premises is closed, and the pupil cannot be practicably accommodated.
- The whole academy site has been closed unexpectedly.
- Public health guidance or law legislates that attendance is respectively not advised or prohibited.
- Any other avoidable cause makes attendance impossible.

The use of the seven 'Y' codes for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes. Code Q will be used in circumstances where there are a lack of access arrangements, eg. The LA has not upheld its duty to arrange the pupil's home to school travel.

10. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the academy has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the academy during the day must be signed out by a parent/carer at the **school office** and signed back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the principal is notified, and they will ensure the parent is contacted in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the academy will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

11. Absent pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the academy premises during the school day unless they have permission from the academy. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the principal immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the principal
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - The library
    - Any outbuildings
    - The academy grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the academy premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted
- If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The academy will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided

- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted
- The absent pupil's form tutor will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

The principal will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The principal will ensure a full investigation is carried out, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the academy has effective procedures for managing absence, the Senior lead Attendance Champion, supported by the attendance officer and SLT, will:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Sending letters to parents.
    - Having a **weekly** class teacher review.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.
    - Creating attendance clinics.

The academy will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The academy will aim to improve attendance in the overall academy cohort by acknowledging good attendance in the following ways:

- **Celebrate cohort and class assemblies in weekly celebration assemblies**
- **100% attendance certificates - Bronze, Silver & Gold, throughout the year**

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

The academy will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of academy life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The academy will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The academy will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the academy has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The academy will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the principal in advance. The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The academy will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the principal and any relevant academy staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the academy's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

14. Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The academy will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The academy will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The academy will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the academy will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the academy's duty of care. The academy will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

15. Legal intervention

The academy will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the academy's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the principal will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the academy will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice may be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the academy will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be help every 3 months.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data **weekly** to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The academy will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The academy cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a **half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.

- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the academy to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The academy will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different academies within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

17. Training of staff

The academy will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. Deletions of names from the admission register

The academy will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be

removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The academy will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the academy is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The academy's attendance target is **96 percent** – full details of the academy's absence levels can be found on the **school website**.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the principal. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

1. A spreadsheet is available to the SLT and Senior Attendance Champion detailing **weekly** and **annual** attendance to date. Rolling annual is reported to all staff weekly and a standing item for weekly SLT agenda.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below **96 percent**, the class teacher speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The attendance officer also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below **90 percent,** without any significant reasons already discussed, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored for **a set period** and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with a member of the Attendance Team and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be made to the Inclusion Team at BCP.
8. After the **set monitoring period**, and if targets are met, they will be back on track to achieve their next attendance award.

If targets are not met, the attendance lead starts the Fastrack process. A letter will be sent to the parent to inform them of the process and an invitation to a meeting at school. A **ten-week** monitoring period is established with a mid-way meeting at **five-weeks** and, if there are no improvements, a fixed penalty notice is requested.

Attendance Agreement Form

Pupil Attendance Agreement

I agree to attend school and understand the consequences I may face if my attendance drops below 100 percent. I will ensure that the academy is made immediately aware of when I will not reasonably be able to attend, and will give the academy full details of my absence.

As a pupil of **Ocean Academy**, I am dedicated to:

- Being in attendance every day.
- Always being punctual to school and lessons.
- Informing the academy of the reason for any absence.
- Not absent from school for trivial reasons.

Pupil name:	**Date:**
Form tutor name:	**Date:**

2. Parental Attendance Agreement

I understand that it is my responsibility to send my child to school. I agree to send my child to school every day and understand the consequences if I fail to do so. When my child is absent from school due to exceptional circumstances, I will ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Parent name:	**Date:**
Form tutor name:	**Date:**