



The High Weald Academy A Brook Learning Trust Academy Attendance Policy



Introduction

At Brook Learning Trust we bring together our unique academies in our belief in the power of education to change lives and communities. It is our steadfast purpose to challenge and defy the barriers that constrain the educational progress of any child. We set high aims for aspiration and secure collective responsibility for all our children's achievements. Our work is underpinned by the values of Integrity, Respect, Courage, Optimism, Excellence and Accountability.

Context

There is a clear correlation between students' attendance and the grades that they achieve, which will then determine what futures will (or will not) be available to each student. DfE research indicates that the chance of a student obtaining 5 GCSE passes including Maths and English are heavily dependent on attendance:

Attendance	Chance of achieving 5 GCSE passes with Maths and English
100%	78%
95-99%	69%
90-94%	53%
85-89%	36%
80-84%	25%
Below 80%	Below 20%

We also desire our students to be in a safe school environment, and to enjoy a continuity of education: with lessons building on previous knowledge it is clear that any absence will hinder progress.

Children are required by law to attend school 190 days per year. The Government states that every pupil's attendance should be at least 95%.

The High Weald Academy Mission Statement

- The High Weald Academy is committed to the continuous raising of the achievement of all our students
- 100% attendance is expected if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. We therefore actively promote 100% attendance for all of our students and we use a variety of rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role and a legal responsibility to ensure good attendance. We promise to identify attendance and punctuality issues, investigate them and work in partnership with parents/carers, students and other agencies to resolve them
- Where there may be barriers to 100% attendance, we are committed to working alongside families to provide support in order to remove such barriers.

We will

- Actively communicate and promote both our mission statement and the rationale behind this
- Always seek to work with families to support good attendance
- Celebrate good or improved attendance with a range of strategies, including but not limited to: recognition in assemblies, phone calls home, postcards home, special awards, eligibility to trips and Academy privileges

- Send a text message home on each day of absence for all students
- Make phone calls where we are concerned, for any reason, about a students' attendance
- Every half term send home a report detailing students' attendance
- Arrange an appointment at parents' evenings with the form tutor to look at attendance and have an up to date summary. Our Attendance Officer will also be available for support and advice
- Work with local agencies as appropriate in order to support good attendance
- Inform families when attendance is reaching the point when a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued
- Issue Fixed Penalty Notices in accordance with legislation, and then refer to the Local Authority any cases of non-payment for prosecution

We expect parents to

- Ensure that we have correct contact details for adults with parental responsibility for children on roll
- Letting us know if you are concerned about your child's attendance, or if any barriers to attendance seem to be developing
- Support the Academy by not condoning anything other than genuine absence
- Contact the Academy on the first day of absence, and provide a written confirmation of the reason for absence upon the student's return to the Academy
- Arrange medical appointments, wherever possible, outside of the Academy day
- Not arrange holidays in term time

Holidays in term time

The government actively discourages holidays during term time and there is no entitlement for families to take students on holiday during term time. Holidays in term time can only be authorised by the Head of School, however it is very unlikely that holidays in term time will be authorised except in the most extenuating of circumstances. It is therefore imperative that holiday arrangements are not made prior to authorisation being given. The Academy is not responsible for the consequences of plans having to be changed due to a holiday not being authorised. The Academy reserves the right to issue Fixed Penalty Notices when an unauthorised holiday is taken during term time.

Persistent Absence (PA)

PA is defined as attendance of less than 90%. If a student's absence falls into this category then parents/carers will be written to advising them of the situation, and offering a meeting with the Attendance Officer and a member of support staff to discuss support strategies. A separate fixed penalty notice can be issued to each parent and for each child if attendance does not improve as described in the letter. On receipt of the Notice, each penalty will be £60, if paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Penalties can be issued per parent/carer per child. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period will result in the Academy notifying the Local Authority, leading to prosecution.

Penalty Notices and the law

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with KCC's Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017. The Attendance Service issues a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded. If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice may be issued. Penalty Notices may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally condoned absences
- Leave of absence in term time without authorisation
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior agreement
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

