

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2018

ASPIRE
ACADEMY
BEXLEY



ENDEAVOUR
ACADEMY
BEXLEY



HORIZONS
ACADEMY
BEXLEY



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1.0 SCHOOL

In order for students to access all the opportunities that each of our Academies provides, regular and punctual attendance is essential. Regular attendance ensures students have continuity of learning, can develop and maintain relationships with their peer groups and staff whilst also developing a pattern of commitment which will create a positive attitude and ethos to support their transition into the world of further education, training or employment. Students who maintain regular attendance also benefit from participating in the attendance reward system, specific to each individual Academy.

Students who attend any of our Academies (Aspire Academy, Endeavour Academy and Horizons Academy Bexley), may have had erratic attendance patterns throughout their recent educational histories. These can be a result of formal and informal exclusions (both fixed term and/or permanent), truancy, undiagnosed medical conditions, long term illness, medical conditions such as depression or anxiety, waiting for specialist school placements, travel arrangements, moving homes or area, parents choosing to keep their children away from school, family difficulties and an absence of value placed upon education. In addition although children may have attended school they may have spent time out of lessons for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to; misbehaviour, internal exclusion, undiagnosed needs (avoidance) or even refusal to enter a classroom. Each and every one on these experiences has a clear and sometimes dramatic impact on each child's educational progress which then compounds any difficulties they may already have or negative feelings they may hold.

For students who attend Horizons Academy Bexley (PRU) on respite placements (Refocus including Medical Needs) and remain on the role of their home school, the process and procedures outlined in this policy will be followed in order to address and improve that student's attendance for the duration of the respite period. However consequential processes for prolonged absence or punctuality issues, including referrals to their chosen Education Welfare Service, will be the responsibility of the home school and dictated by their attendance policy. It is an expectation that Horizons Academy Bexley (Refocus including Medical Needs) staff, home school staff and all relevant linked agencies will work in partnership to achieve and maintain excellent school attendance and punctuality with Professional Meetings being convened prior to placements commencing when deemed necessary by Horizons Academy Bexley. Professional Meetings are considered a crucial process in order to plan and manage our students in a safe, appropriate manner. Failure of professionals, home or referring schools/academies to attend professional meeting may delay a students' start date if Horizons Academy Bexley believes the Academy community safety and wellbeing could be compromised.

In order to ensure consistency, accuracy of recorded attendance and access to appropriate early help and intervention, **all home schools must mirror image their students attendance of Refocus, following receipt of the weekly attendance certificate every Friday.** This ensures already established legal processes remain insitu and evidence to access early help or intervention and support, remains current. Relevant Horizons Academy Bexley staff will liaise daily with home school staff and all related external agencies in relation to individual student punctuality, attendance and safeguarding updates and are expected to work jointly to remove barriers preventing each student achieving above 95% attendance. This may include co-ordinated external referrals for example Family Wellbeing when required. This process will be further embedded by the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators supporting Professional Meetings, Initial Interviews, Reviews and Final Meetings. If the

home school require information outside of the formal structure, then a request can be made to the relevant Horizons Academy Bexley member of staff.

For those students who are permanently excluded and placed through 6th Day Provision or have a permanent exclusion rescinded their attendance and safeguarding will be the responsibility of Horizons Academy Bexley. Horizons Academy Bexley will again follow the daily attendance procedures in order to assess, address, review and improve student attendance which is expected to be maintained above 95%. However the consequential process will work in partnership with allocated staff and the relevant Local Authority Education Welfare Service which is reflected and outlined in this policy.

Students who reintegrate back into mainstream school following either a permanent or rescinded exclusion can remain on roll at Horizons Academy Bexley for a period of 6 weeks, if they are in receipt of ongoing support from the Outreach Service and the new school has not required Local Authority direction. During this 6 week period students will be main rolled with their new school where they attend daily but will remain on the dual rolled of Horizons Academy Bexley and will be recorded as D Code on the register. It is the responsibility of the main roll school to address attendance or safeguarding matters during this 6 week period and reintegration failure in the form of permanent exclusion should not be determined on the basis of poor or persistent absence as this is not legal.

Students who have suffered prolonged periods of non-attendance will obviously find it difficult to return to the expectations of a classroom setting for a variety of reasons including loss of habit, fear of the work or teacher expectations and further conflict or failure. During Refocus, Long Term placements or Permanent places across all our Academies, we endeavour to identify the individual student and family barriers impacting on punctuality and attendance through daily assessment, intervention and review. Our ethos is to work on an early intervention, preventative basis by promptly identifying barriers and initiating specific support and guidance to enable students and parents to fully benefit from what each Academy has to offer. Therefore, working in partnership with families and carers is an essential element of our work. We adopt a consistent, robust and honest approach to communication to ensure parents/carers have information and access to the intervention and support we can provide. It is the responsibility of our parents/carers to ensure we are kept up to date with contact details and change of address. Additionally parents are made fully aware from the outset and on a regular basis of the national and Academies expectations regarding their student's level of attendance and punctuality to enable their child to achieve their full social and academic potential.

2.0 EXPECTATION OVERVIEW

All our Academies begin the morning with Tutor Time or Registration, except for Westbrook Primary School. This is when registration takes place and where each student is expected to arrive on time and in full correct uniform, ready for the day ahead. Endeavour Academy and Horizons Academy Bexley Secondary Refocus both offer Break Club to assist our students to be nutritionally fit for the school day and provide valuable time for staff to communicate with students to help build positive relationships.

2.1 TRAVEL

There are various ways in which students will be expected to travel to school which is the responsibility of the parents/carers. Those students attending Endeavour Academy, Aspire Academy and Horizons Academy Bexley Refocus Primary may be transported to and from home

by either minibus or taxi via the Local Authority or provided by the home school to encourage participation in the Refocus. Both options will depend if they meet the specific criteria outside of our remit and control. Parents/carers are expected to ensure their student is ready for collection from home each morning at a designated time. In consideration for other taxi passengers and in order to arrive to our Academies promptly, students will be allowed a maximum of three minutes 'waiting time' at which stage the taxi/mini bus will then leave and it will then become the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure their student arrives to school on time. Students who are not ready in time for transport and do not attend school will be marked as an unauthorised absence; alternate decisions are made at the discretion of the Inclusion Manager and/or Head of School.

Parents/carers are expected to notify their relevant school or the transport directly of any absence related to illness and/or medical appointments at their earliest convenience to ensure absence is recorded correctly.

Should the Local Authority Transport or transport arranged by home school, remove a student's access to transport for any reason they deem appropriate including but not limited to; behaviour or poor attendance, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure the child is in school on time, daily. The removal of transport does not permit an authorised absence and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised (O Code). Student absence due to the removal of transport as a result of poor behaviour or poor attendance may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service as it remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure alternative methods are put in place to ensure regular attendance is maintained and the students education is not disrupted.

Students who travel to and from school by an Oyster Card also need to be aware Transport for London (TfL) have devised a Behaviour Code which they expect all young people to adhere to at all times when they are travelling on public transport. This code is in place to ensure everyone travels safely with due respect for fellow passengers, staff and property and failure to adhere to the expected behaviours can result in this free concession being withdrawn. The removal of an Oyster Card does not permit an authorised absence and will therefore be recorded as unauthorised (O Code). Student absence due to the removal of an Oyster Card as a result of poor behaviour may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service as it remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure alternative transport methods are put in place to ensure regular attendance is maintained. It equally remains the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their student still attends school regularly and on time following the loss or damage of their Oyster Card as failure attend for this reason will also result in an unauthorised absence (O Code).

Please see the attached letter from Transport for London (TfL) outlining their expectations and definitions of unacceptable Antisocial Behaviour and further information can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/anti-social-behaviour-on-public-transport-safety-measures>

2.2 GOVERNING BODY AND MANAGEMENT/SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Heads of School and Leadership Teams take a daily active role in student attendance and punctuality. Management and Senior Leaders will receive, participate and review attendance information, data and reports on a regular basis and support the embedding of our attendance ethos. All members of the Senior Leadership Teams including Managers will receive copies of Weekly NH Hub Attendance Meeting Minutes undertaken by the Inclusion Team and also SIMs Attendance Overview Data provided by MIS/SIMS Manager. Each Manager or Senior Member of staff will have access to a Key Stage Attendance Overview Folder containing all relevant, related and current

attendance information and data which has ongoing updates. Attendance remains a rolling agenda item on the fortnightly Operational Management Meetings and also on the Termly Senior Leadership Team Meetings. Adhoc strategic/review meetings will also be convened in relation to unforeseen attendance and punctuality themes occurring and changes in local and government policy and guidance.

Governors are encouraged and expected to take an active role in student attendance and punctuality and the processes we adopt in response. The designated Governor should regularly attend the Weekly Attendance Meeting and actively participate in the strategic and operational review of Attendance process, support and intervention including offering representation at Attendance Surgeries in liaison with the Education Welfare Service. Governors will receive and review regular attendance data included in the Heads of School Reports in addition to the regular reports submitted by the Inclusion Manager, to allow challenge and analysis of overall impact and outcomes. In partnership with the Inclusion Manager and Governing Body, the Executive Headteacher will set annual attendance targets working in tandem with the School Improvement Plan and recognised in individual key staff members' performance management targets.

2.3. PARENTS/CARERS

The Department for Education (Dfe) states parents/carers are legally obliged to:

- Secure education for their children of compulsory school age whether at school or otherwise (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) and
- Ensure regular attendance once the pupil has been registered (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

In addition parents/carers have a duty to support the importance and value of education as a whole. The Department of Education (Dfe) guidance recommends: -

"Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Furthermore they need to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children. This means instilling in their children a respect for education - and for those who deliver it - and ensuring that pupils complete homework on time. Parents should impress upon their children the need to observe schools' code of conduct and reinforce this through discipline in the home."

In line with the Dfe School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Guidance (2015, updated January 2017), parents/carers of all our Academy students are expected to support their student's prompt and regular arrival to school. Appropriate support and intervention is made available following assessment within each Academy, to families where attendance is a concern and deterioration or patterns of change are evident. Internal support and intervention is offered via the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators, Outreach Staff, Behaviour Learning Mentors, Progress Coaches and Form/Class Tutors. External support and intervention can include but is not limited to Early Help (Family Wellbeing), Integrated Youth Service, School Nurse, Education Welfare Service, Community Safety Team, Schools Police, CAMHS and childrens social care. Referrals may be made by an Academy without parental consent when it is deemed necessary to ensure the wellbeing of a student. Designated staff are however encouraged and expected to work alongside home to engage the student, identifying and working towards removing barriers to learning to encourage, increase and maintain punctual and regular attendance.

Parents/carers **must** contact the relevant Academy on the first day of absence and keep the Academy updated on a regular basis throughout the absence period. Should a student be absent from school parents/carers are expected to inform the relevant Academy before registration time and will be notified formally in writing should such time arise that medical evidence is required. Additionally it is both important and helpful to keep the Academy informed of any changes in family circumstances to enable the School to appropriately support student whilst in school or during their return. Recording attendance is the responsibility of the Attendance Administrator within each Academy and coding is determined at the discretion of the Head of School/Inclusion Manager in partnership with the allocated Pastoral Support Co-ordinator. All registration coding decisions are made in line with Dfe School Attendance Guidance (published 2013, updated September 2018)

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to provide the Academy with current home contact details to enable absence calls to be completed daily. The Academies inability or failure to make home contact to confirm a student's absence will result in a home visit from the allocated Pastoral Support Co-ordinator until contact is made and/or the absence is addressed. Allocated Pastoral Support Co-ordinators are expected to adopt a solution-focused approach when making home contact to continually improve attendance and to challenge inappropriate excuses, investigate regular patterns of unauthorised absence and to support parents/carers in ensuring their student attends school on a regular basis. Home liaison and support is expected to initially take the form of supplying parents/carers with basic, practical advice and may involve early morning 'wake up' calls before the start of school and on rare occasions collecting and transporting students into school when deemed absolutely necessary. However it is expected intensive home support has to be limited to allow families to develop their own coping strategies and build resilience in the students. Working with families and students to help identify and adopt the own solutions is a key element of a Pastoral Support Co-ordinators. Should families require and consent when required to additional external support, the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators, in partnership with the Safeguarding Liaison Officer, Inclusion Manager and Head of School, are expected to initiate and facilitate relevant referrals whilst continuing to support improved attendance. However should be deemed a referral in the interest of the student, this may be undertaken without consent.

If contact either via telephone or a home visit is unsuccessful, in line with our Safeguarding Policy, a Welfare Home Check by our Safeguarding Liaison Officer can be triggered. Prolonged failure to provide current contact details, failure to make direct contact or a concern for student wellbeing can also result in a safeguarding concern being raised, resulting in a referral/consultation with social care and/or police. This can include a request for a welfare check via the Police. Should the school be made aware a student has left for school in the morning but has failed to arrive in school, a report to Police and/or social care may be initiated in partnership with parent/carer. Equally the same process will be following if a student decides to leave the Academy premises without permission or has permission but does not arrive home. However should a parent/carer, in any circumstance refuse to notify relevant agencies including reporting to the Police (missing/101) that the students whereabouts are unknown, the Academy reserves the right to notify all relevant agencies (including but not limited to Police and childrens social care) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student, which remains our priority.

**We mandatorily share all student attendance information with statutory agencies and known voluntary agents who are currently working with the family/student including but not limited to social care, police, community safety and youth offending service in line with GDPR 2018 and Sharing Information 2015. Storage of information is also in line with GDPR 2018.*

2.4 STUDENTS

Students are expected to value their education and themselves, with staff and parents/carers helping students to understand that an education will provide future post statutory choices and opportunities. All students are expected to arrive to school on time, ready and prepared for the day ahead, firstly by handing in their bags and phones at reception. Students will not be permitted to enter school without doing so. Students are also expected to wear school uniform and to remain on site for the length of their timetable. If a student arrives to school without the correct school uniform, parent/carer will be contacted and asked to bring in the correct uniform. With parent/carer consent a student may be allowed to return home for the correct uniform but is expected to return in a timely manner.

A student will not receive their registration mark until they return to school in full, correct school uniform. If a student chooses to leave the school site, parents/carers will be notified and they will be marked as truanting and will be recorded as absent until they return. Students are never expected to leave school site without pre agreed notification from parent/carer and agreed by a relevant member of staff, in partnership with home. We have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people (Section 175 of the Education Act 2002) and registering children is one of our fundamental safeguarding processes therefore we must ensure the registration marks are recorded correctly. Furthermore should a student leave the Academy site and they are deemed at risk, their whereabouts are unknown or we have a concern for their wellbeing, then we may notify statutory agencies including but not limited to, social care and/or police as it is our duty to ensure their safety, irrespective of consent.

Students are encouraged to talk to staff regarding any issues that may affect their attendance to provide staff with the opportunity to deal with matters quickly, appropriately and at the earliest opportunity to prevent a student from missing any education. This may include peer issues, curriculum concerns or any external factors impacting of daily attendance.

2.5 STAFF

For some of our student parents/carers will not view education with a sense of value or purpose and will not therefore habitually see the importance or need to attend school on a regular basis. Improving attendance is a whole school ethos and everyone's responsibility, therefore we expect all staff to encourage and promote excellent punctual, regular attendance.

All our Academies are expected to support the high expectation for student attendance which are role modelled first and foremost, by our own excellent attendance. Discussions with students regarding absence or punctuality should always reflect our high expectations and in cases of doubt should be referred to the Inclusion Manager or Head of School.

1. Our high standard for attendance is expected to be emphasised by staff to students at the initial interview/entry stage with both parents/carers and most importantly with the student prior to admission to our Academies and through an Attendance Agreement.
2. Staff are expected to regularly outline to students why it is important to attend school punctually and consistently, setting individual targets when required during lessons and tutor time.
3. Attendance and individual student attendance visual displays should be present in classrooms and staff room to promote and embedded attendance awareness.
4. Staff are not permitted to allow or facilitate students leaving school site during the school day without Head of School/Inclusion Manager and parent/carer permission.

5. Staff are expected to relay to parents/carers and students, help and support is available.
6. Staff are expected to have positive conversations with students when effort and improvements are witnessed – focus on the positive.
7. Staff are expected to call their students when they are absent, to explain their presence has been missed and they will be welcomed back.
8. Attendance is a joint partnership responsibility between student, home, home school and us and we are all expected to make every effort to engage families in understanding and supporting the value of good attendance.
9. Staff are expected to encourage the use of Breakfast Club, especially for those travelling a distance every day.
10. Staff are expected to discuss attendance concerns with the Pastoral Support Co-ordinators to promote a preventative and early help approach to absence.
11. Staff must raise any safeguarding concerns impacting on student attendance through our Safeguarding process on the same day as the concern materialises.
12. Staff will discuss and plan daily actions to address and overcome poor punctuality and absence.

3.0 PROCESSES

3.1 REGISTERS AND DAILY ACTIONS

Each Academy must ensure student attendance and absence is recorded (AM and PM), these recordings constitute the official register, which is a legal document (The Education (Pupil's Registration) Regulations 1995 and (Amendment) 1997).

If a valid, acceptable reason to the Academy is provided for a student's absence the Academy will ensure the appropriate code is entered on the register. All codes are utilised in line with Dfe School Attendance Guidance (November 2016) and reviewed regularly by Bexley Education Welfare Service, including annual Register Swoops and Checks.

- Tutors, Managers and members of the Senior Leadership will adopt a daily preventative approach to absence and lateness by utilising early morning telephone or home visit contacts in order to improve both areas.
- Registers are taken during Registration/Tutor Time at all schools except Aspire Academy where registration occurs as the students arrive through the main door at 8.55am.
- At Aspire Academy students are marked (L) on the register until 9.30am and (U) thereafter.
- At Aspire Academy the school day ends at 2.55pm.
- Registers are collected the Attendance Administration Staff (except Aspire Academy).
- At Endeavour Academy Breakfast Club runs from 8.45am – 9am. Students are expected in school for the start of tutor time at 9am.
- At Endeavour Academy if a student arrives after Tutor Time (9.15am) and before 9.45am they will be marked as Late (L) on the register. If a student arrives after 9.45am they will be marked as an (U) on the register. This means the student is in school and present, however you have arrived too late and your mark will not be counted against your overall attendance percentage.
- Endeavour Academy school day ends at 2.50pm.

- Horizons Academy Bexley – Refocus (Primary/Secondary/Medical Needs) and Long Term KS4 (including Welling Centre).

Area of Horizons Academy Bexley	Start Time	End Time
Refocus Secondary	Monday – Friday 8.45am-8.55am Breakfast Club 8.55am Tutor	Monday – Friday 3pm
Refocus Primary	Monday - Friday 8.30am	Monday – Thursday 2.30 pm Friday – 1pm
Refocus Medical Needs	Monday – Friday 8.45am	Monday – Thursday 3pm Friday 1.15pm
Long Term KS4	Monday – Friday 8.55am Tutor	Monday – Thursday 3.10pm Friday 1.40pm
Welling Centre	Monday – Friday 8.55am Tutor	Monday – 3pm Tuesday – Thursday 3.10pm Friday – 1.40pm

**Any student who arrives 15 minutes after 9am (9.15am) they will receive a Late Mark (L Code). If a student arrives more than 15 minutes late they will receive an Unauthorised Late Mark (U Code) which equates to an absent mark and will detrimentally affect a student's overall attendance.*

- Students with acceptable reasons for absence will be marked accordingly which is determined at the discretion of Head of School/Inclusion Manager.
- We may determine no further absence will be authorised unless medical proof is provided and will send a letter notifying parents/carers of this decision.
- All our Academies are permitted by the Bexley Local Authority to use the B Code to support a student's attendance of any appointment which endeavours to improve behaviour, engagement and attendance of school but the reasons why must be clearly defined in the SIMS attendance comment section.
- All Attendance is recorded on SIMS in line with GDPR 2018.
- It is the responsibility of the Attendance Administrator and staff undertaking related communication, to ensure attendance data is recorded accurately on SIMS with relating comments.
- Parents/carers will be contacted by telephone to confirm a student's absence.
- If we are unable to make contact and we are not aware of a reason for absence, a Pastoral Support Co-ordinator will endeavour to make a Home Visit to again verify the absence and ensure student wellbeing.
- If a student's whereabouts is unknown we may report a student missing if a parent/carer is unable or chooses not to. This decision is always made in the interest of the child's welfare and may take place without parent/carer consent.
- If contact cannot be made our Safeguarding Liaison Officer will conduct a Welfare Call to the home address, in liaison with the Inclusion Manager and relevant Head of School.
- Prolonged failure to make contact or a concern for student welfare may result in a consultation/referral to social care or Police in line with our Safeguarding Policy.
- All our students who are absent will be reviewed at the weekly Attendance Meeting Chaired by the Inclusion Manger and in partnership with Pastoral Support Co-ordinators, Safeguarding Liaison Officer , allocated Education Welfare Officers and Designated Governor (on regular basis). Additional agencies may also attend through invite only.

- All Academies work in partnership with Bexley Education Welfare Service and we will determine when to convene regular Attendance Surgeries, Penalty Notices and formal referrals in order to address poor attendance or punctuality.
- A Penalty Notice is utilised, in the first instance where other processes have been exhausted or as a way to support improved attendance.
- We only ever apply for a Penalty Notice or next steps action via our allocated Education Welfare Officer when we deem it in the best interest of the student and can evidence that all other pathways have been exhausted and unsuccessful.
- Allocated Academy staff have a responsibility to liaise and update relevant agencies and parents/carers of student absence.
- We have a duty of care to challenge actions taken or not taken, that we feel are contrary to the students best interests and needs.
- Students who are dual rolled and fail to attend a respite programme (Refocus Secondary, Primary or Medical Needs) on a regular basis can have their placements terminated at the discretion of the Head of School or Inclusion Manager and in consultation with home school. The student is expected to return immediately to their home school as single rolled. Students who fail to return to their home schools are the responsibility of the home school but referrals to statutory agencies including but not limited to; Local Authority Children Missing Education Teams can be undertaken in partnership, as the safety of the child remains paramount.

3.2 INTERVENTION AND CONSEQUENCES

Early identification of issues is a faster and more effective way to see improvements in student attendance. When a student is working formally with an external agency, all meetings between the agency and student would be after 2.30pm, with parental consent (outside of statutory social care and police investigations). This approach is to minimise impact and disruption of learning for all our students, it also recognises the impact on the emotional and social affect that such meetings can have on behaviour and therefore again prevent negative impact on learning.

As standard practice we work with a solution based approach to implementing strategies as early as possible to tackle poor attendance and/or lateness and we have specific designated skilled members of staff to deliver to deliver the strategies. These are;

1. Pastoral Support Co-ordinators – whilst attending one of our Academies may consist of example of 1-2-1 sessions, small group work, home support or working in partnership with statutory agencies.
2. Attendance Intervention Worker – refer based intensive work to improve persistent absence or punctuality issues.
3. Outreach Support – for students reintegrating back to mainstream school (or new school following permanent exclusion) working in partnership with home school staff.
4. Behaviour Mentors – offering targeted support to address behaviour that may impact on attendance or classroom engagement.
5. Progress Coaches – focusing a student on achieving their potential.
6. Careers & Transition Officers – exploring post 16 options, encouraging focus and ambition and highlighting the value of education and grades through the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.
7. Form Tutors/Teachers – daily support to encourage and inspire regular attendance and a positive approach to education.

Weekly Attendance Team Meetings will also take place to determine appropriate action to rectify any attendance deterioration by discussing, identifying and implementing interventions promptly

in partnership with parents/carers and students and external agencies when agreed appropriate. Underlying causes discussed may include unidentified education needs, undiagnosed medical needs, peer group issues, family difficulties, social problems, disaffection and lateness.

Attendance Surgeries also take place on a regular basis in each Academy for those students with less than 90% attendance, those who patterns of attendance have suddenly changed and those who are receiving unauthorised lates and despite our daily steps no improvement has been seen. This process is deemed as an additional form of early intervention and a further means to identify and support improved attendance. Attendance Contracts are implemented at the initial Surgery and reviewed if attendance or punctuality is not improved. Attendance Contracts can be used as evidence should a student's absence escalate to a formal court process or a basis to apply to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice. Attendance Surgeries are also a pre-requisite to statutory referrals Local Authority Statutory Education Welfare Service unless absence is a potential safeguarding issue and parents/carers fail to attend their given date/time. Attendance Surgeries take place on an allotted time and date, with the allocated Education Welfare Officer and Inclusion Manager (Safeguarding Liaison Officer in her absence) present to provide additional information, outline expectations, initiate support plans and also guidance to students, parents/carers and School staff. Parents will be given at least 5 day's notice of the meeting time/date and all efforts will be made to ensure attendance however an Attendance Surgery can go ahead in the parents/carers absence when efforts have been exhausted to encourage parental/carer attendance. All formal processes are equally applied to students who hold either an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or have Looked After Child (LAC/CiC) status, however this will take place in partnership with relevant statutory agencies including but not limited to LA SEN Departments and relevant Virtual School.

Our Academies may also implement Pastoral Support Plan (Reduced Timetable) as a further short term intervention to support improved attendance/behaviour but to also in an attempt to manager risk posed to or from a student. Pastoral Support Plans (PSP's) are initiated by the Academy, in agreement with the parent/carers and statutory agencies when appropriate, and is where a student has a timetable amended or reduced in hours in order to meet a student's current change in educational, social, behavioural needs or increase in presenting or predicted risk. PSP's are an internal interim intervention with the overall aim of a student successfully returning to a fulltime time table and are reviewed on a fortnightly basis with partnership with parents/carers, external agencies if relevant, and the student. PSP's will only be implemented for Looked After Students or students on the Child Protection Register, in liaison with all relevant statutory agencies and with Virtual School support, also recorded in nearest scheduled Personal Education Plan. LA SEN Department will also be informed of all students subject to an interim reduced timetable. Emergency Annual Reviews may also be initiated should this be required in order to access additional support for students attending Endeavour or Aspire Academy.

We may also further consider the implementation of a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) where a student is required to participate in a personalised timetable of Edlounge and on/off site learning totalling 25 hours per week. This may be implemented again to manage and reduce risk, to reengage or to allow interventions to take place. The plan will be reviewed every two weeks in partnership with parents/carers, students and any statutory agencies involved. Alternative provision can only be implemented as part of a PLP if the education on offer is by a DfE registered provision and is graded either the same or higher than the Academy, by Ofsted. This is to ensure all our students are afforded the same opportunities as their peers and are not penalised through the education they receive. This can also only be implemented with the agreement of the Head of School, in partnership with

external statutory agencies when relevant. Please view our Adaption to Education Hours Policy 2018.

There are however occasions when intervention, reduced or amended timetable and support unfortunately does not have the desired outcome and alternative formal and/or legal processes will be instigated via the Local Authority in order to address poor attendance or unauthorised lateness.

In accordance with the Dfe guidance the London Borough of Bexley has a statutory requirement to:

- Ensure that parents/carers fulfil their obligations
- Provide services to support parent in achieving optimum attendance
- Take appropriate action where parents fail in that duty; (Sect. 444 Education Act 1996) See Code of Practice

All our Academies work in close partnership with an allocated Education Welfare Officer as designated by Bexley's Education Welfare Service including allocated LAC Education Welfare Officer. The Education Welfare Officer will meet weekly, fortnightly, monthly or half termly depending on the level of need within individual Academies. Bexley Education Welfare Officers work in close partnership with all our Academies, parents, carers and other relevant external agencies to support, improve and maintain excellent school attendance and punctuality. Successful outcomes depend upon effective collaboration, communication and the commitment of all concerned including students, parents and carers to always work in the best interest of the child.

In relation to attendance, under the Education Act 1996 Local Authority actions may include;

- The issuing of fixed penalty notices in accordance with their code of practice (applied to both unauthorised absence and unauthorised holiday)
- Attendance Surgeries
- Pre Court Meetings
- Parenting Order
- Referrals to statutory external agencies
- Court action where necessary (Section 444 (1) and (1a) 1996 Education Act)
- Overseeing of Education Supervision Orders (Section 36 of the Children's Act 1989)
- Contact with families to advise on exclusion procedures and management of data on exclusions
- Child employment and performance licences
- Links and liaison with the Elective Home Education Service advisers
- Advice on child protection issues

For further information and guidance on Bexley Education Welfare Service please visit;

<http://www.bexley.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5693>

Bexley Education Welfare Service

Telephone: 020 8303 7777

Email: educationwelfare@bexley.gov.uk

3.3 CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

We have a safeguarding duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate unexplained student absence. We robustly monitor absence through daily registers, home communication and daily home visits. We equally have a duty to liaise with relevant Local Authority Education Welfare Services and Local Authority CME Teams if a student is regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. This process may be initiated earlier than 10 days, when we deem it is in the best interest of the child to do so or there a concern for student wellbeing or safety including but not limited to; radicalisation, county lines, exploitation and gang association. Any immediate concerns for a student's safety will be reported to police and/or social care in line with our Safeguarding Policy, Prevent (Prevent Policy 2018) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) statutory reporting and standard Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) responsibilities.

We notify Local Authority CME Team and all relevant agencies of all children who leave the area but will undertake our own validation and tracking if forwarding address, new county or name of proposed new school is provided. Where a student is dual rolled, our allocated staff will liaise with the home school to ensure appropriate notification and tracking procedures are followed to prevent any child becoming missing from education and protect them from potential harm. Our Academies also validate any move to a new school via a casual admission within 7 days and additionally report to the appropriate CME Team (not limited to Bexley), if there is no evidence this transfer has taken place. Each Academy records and tracks all students who meet the criteria of CME when a student is removed from roll and will make all necessary referrals in addition to formal CME referral, when deemed in the best interest of the child, which is also verified through the Safeguarding Internal Audits. Each Academy is responsible for completing and maintaining their own CME Log, which should accurately cross reference with the students who have come off roll during the academic year.

Students who are permanently excluded (PEX) and parents/carers refuse to attend 6th day provision at Horizons Academy Bexley are expected to put this in writing. This will then be forwarded to the home school who will be advised to make a referral to their own Education Welfare Service and also as a Child Missing out on Education if this take place prior to the 15 day Panel Hearing. We would request confirmation of these actions and record this information on our internal CME tracking for students who do not take a place with us. If the decision to PEX has been upheld the responsibility to refer to appropriate agencies including CME, will become that of the Horizons Academy Bexley.

Bexley Child Missing Education Co-ordinator – Susan Garner

Telephone: 020 8303 7777

Email: Susan.Garner@bexley.gov.uk

3.4 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)

Elective Home Education (EHE) is an option to parents may choose for their student as an alternative to school.

There is no requirement for any formal qualifications, or to be a teacher to educate your child at home and parents can choose to engage Private Tutors or other suitable adults to assist then although it is no a requirement to do so. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable;

- a) To age, ability and aptitude, and
- b) To any special needs they may have,

Either by regular attendance at School or otherwise.'

Our Academies respect parents' rights to opt for EHE. However, if the decision has been made as a result of a dispute with one of our Academies, we will actively encourage and support contact the allocated Education Welfare Officer or Local Authority Elective Home Education Officer for impartial advice on resolving the issues in order that your child can remain at, or return to the Academy.

Special attention will be paid by us to EHE applications for students/families that hold formal safeguarding status. Although any status does not remove a parental right to educate at home, any EHE applications will only be actioned when relevant agencies have been notified and a plan of support has been requested by us to ensure the students best interest and welfare remains paramount.

EHE applications for students who hold an Education Health Care Plan will not be actioned until an Emergency Annual Review takes place and a statutory plan agreed in liaison with relevant Local Authority Special Education Needs Departments and all other relevant agencies.

EHE application for students who have Looked After Child status will not be actioned until an Emergency Review Meeting has taken place with social care, Virtual School and parent/carer holding parental responsibility and an agreed decision is made in the best interest of the child. Should the carer/social car/virtual school chose not to participate, the EHE application will be processed with our concerns noted on the referral.

Students who are permanently excluded (PEX) and parents/carers decide to EHE prior to attending 6th day provision at Horizons Academy Bexley will be requested to put this in writing addressed to their home school. We will then forward this to the home school that will be advised to make a referral to the LA EHE Officer. We would request confirmation of these actions and record this information on our internal CME tracking. If the decision to PEX has been upheld the responsibility to refer to appropriate agencies will become that of the Federation and we will implement our daily attendance and safeguarding procedures to encourage engagement and attendance.

Before a parent makes the final decision to remove their child from the school roll, it is strongly advisable they contact the Local Authority's EHE Liaison Officer for an informal, impartial discussion regarding further information, including the procedure to be followed and guidance on the law.

Bexley Elective Home Education Liaison Officer – Lorraine Gold

Telephone: 020 8303 7777

Email: lorraine.gold@bexley.gov.uk

All students who come off an Academy roll due to Elective Home Education are also recorded on our internal CME Log.

3.5 OFF ROLLING

Although removal of compulsory-school-aged children from roll is permitted under certain circumstances defined in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, We acknowledge the magnitude of this initiating this process and the importance of this decision as we would not aim to compromise a student's wellbeing or breach legal duties. Students will not be deleted from a school roll without authorisation from the Inclusion Manager.

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – Regulation 8 sets out the criteria under which compulsory-school-aged children can be removed from school roll. We summarise and will apply the following criteria to remove students from roll and make all relevant notifications and referrals:

- 8 (1) (d) The parent(s) have elected to home-educate (EHE) Parents have a right to withdraw their child from a school in favour of home education. The child must not be removed from the school roll until the parent has given written notification of their decision to educate the child at home.
- 8 (1) (e) The student has ceased to attend and is no longer residing within reasonable distance to the school (not limited to being out of Borough). Students can be deleted from roll where the distance to school is deemed unreasonable and the parent has no intention of maintaining the school place. Distance also comprises ease of access. A public transport journey time in excess of 75 minutes for secondary school pupil would be unreasonable. A walking distance exceeding two miles would be unreasonable for a primary school pupil. Schools may remove a child from roll under this criterion without waiting for confirmation of a school transfer. However, the school must obtain details of the child's new address. Where a parent has notified the school that the child is leaving the country and the school has reason for concern, such as a history of poor attendance or safeguarding issues, the parent should be asked to provide proof of travel and make all relevant referrals including mandatory reporting under PREVENT if considered relevant.
- 8 (1) (f) The student has failed to return following authorised leave of absence exceeding 10 school days for the purpose of a holiday. A student who has failed to return following extended authorised leave of absence can be removed from roll providing all three of the following three conditions are fulfilled:
 - i. The student has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted.
 - ii. there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.
 - iii. both the school and the Local Authority have made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.
- 8 (1) (h) The pupil has been missing from school for 20 days or more continuously Schools may remove missing children from roll providing all three of the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - i. At no time was the absence during that period authorised by the school
 - ii. there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause
 - iii. both the school and the Local Authority have made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.
- 8 (1) (h) The student has been given a custodial sentence for four months or longer as a result of a final order. A child who is taken into custody for four months or more as a result of a final order can be taken off roll, unless the school has reason to believe that he/she will return to the school at the end of the period. Schools must not deregister a pupil who is remanded in custody and awaiting a trial or hearing at a future date.

If a child moves out of Borough and has resided there for a period of more than 20 school days and they have either failed or had minimal attendance, they may be removed from the school roll. This may result in a referral to both Bexley and the new Borough CME team and when deemed

appropriate may also include childrens social care referrals and/or request for police welfare check and recorded on our internal CME Log.

3.6 TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

In September 2013, the Dfe amended the regulations governing requests for student holidays during terms time. These regulations make it clear the Head of School or Executive Headteacher may not grant holidays or other absences during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

However due to the recent outcome of a relevant court case where the refusal to authorise a term time holiday was challenged and that challenge upheld, Bexley Local Authority has acknowledged consideration can be given by the Executive Headteacher only, where there are exceptional circumstances and the student has above 90% attendance on the date the application for leave is made. In order for leave to be considered under exceptional circumstances all requests must be made in writing in at least 7 days advance of the first day of proposed leave to Jo Southby, the Executive Headteacher.

The Executive Headteacher will consider the request on an individual basis and you will be notified of her decision in writing.

If a child is attending our Horizons Academy Bexley Refocus at the time the holiday is taken and is dual registered with their home school, the programme will be suspended for the duration of the holiday and re-started upon the students return. During this time students will revert back to home school role and responsibility. If the home school has not authorised the holiday leave then it will be the responsibility of the home school to implement their absence process in relation to their Attendance Policy and potential Penalty Notice. This ensures that students attending our respite (Refocus) provisions receives access to the full intervention programme.

Parents/Carers, who decide to take students out of school during term time without the Executive Headteachers permission and have below 90% attendance on the day the application for leave was made, may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice via an application to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service in accordance with their Code of Practice. This is currently £60 per parent, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

For information please go to:

www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance

DOCUMENT REVISION

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