



**Tudor Grange Academies Trust**

## **Robert Smyth Academy Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

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| 07.07.21     | 1.1     | Annual review. Administrative updates and 'Students' amended to 'Pupils' throughout.<br>Addition of TGPAP to 4.4.   |
| 01.01.21     | 1.2     | Addition of TGPAHH to 4.4.  |
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| 11.10.22     | 1.4     | Update to table 4.4 (Central version)   |
| 31.01.23     | 1.5     | Addition of section 11<br>Update to section 2.5   |
| 01.09.23     | 1.6     | Update to para 2.5<br>Addition of Registration closing times and of TGPAL to 4.4 (Central version)<br>Update to paragraphs 4.9 and 6.3.<br>New Section 11 on sixth form attendance. |

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole of the Tudor Robert Smyth Academy community, thus enabling and encouraging all on roll at the Academy to achieve excellence. Attendance has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups

of pupils and the standards thereby achieved by the Academy. Securing good attendance is a fundamental responsibility within our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our schools (DfE, Working Together to Safeguard Children).

- 1.2 To enable pupils to reach their full academic potential it is vital that they attend regularly and on time every day that the Academy is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable, as poor attendance results in pupils making less progress, both socially and academically.

## **2 Rationale**

- 2.1 Parents/carers of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (Section 444) to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age and students who attend the Academy for post-16 education attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from the Academy is an offence and parents/carers may be referred to the Local Authority if their child's attendance is poor.
- 2.2 Attendance is important and statistics will be regularly reviewed by the Principal and senior leaders.
- 2.3 Robert Smyth Academy aims to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all pupils. Excellent attendance and punctuality will be recognised. Rewards and incentives offered by our academy are:
  - Golden Tickets
  - VIP Postcards
  - Attendance Challenge
- 2.4 Each school within the trust has a senior staff member dedicated to overseeing and supporting excellent attendance. The leader responsible for attendance at our academy is Danielle Paterson.
- 2.5 The Trust Strategic Attendance Lead is Gulfam Shahzad, the Executive Trust Lead for Safeguarding is Clare Waterhouse and the Trust Attendance Welfare Officer is Shelley Haddon.
- 2.6 Each school has a system in place for reporting absence from school. The system used by our academy is via the form on the school website  
<https://www.robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk/parents/attendance/>

## **3 Aims**

- 3.1 To achieve 100% attendance of pupils within Robert Smyth Academy.
- 3.2 To improve pupils' attainment, engagement and wellbeing through good attendance.
- 3.3 To work with parents/carers:
  - to ensure their child attends school regularly.
  - to ensure their child is punctual to the Academy and individual lessons.
  - to support and encourage their child by attending parents' evenings and other events.
  - to contact their child's tutor in the first instance to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
  - to work in collaboration with the Academy to resolve any issues that are impacting their child's attendance and achievement.

- 3.4 To make sure attendance and punctuality is a priority for everyone associated with TGAT including parents, pupils, staff, and governors.
- 3.5 Robert Smyth Academy will challenge the attitude of those pupils, parents and staff who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.

#### **4 Registration**

- 4.1 The following documents specify the statutory requirements and provide guidance with regards to completing and maintaining an attendance register:
- The Education Act 1996 – section 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and any subsequent amendment
  - DfE School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures
  - DfE School Attendance Guidance for maintained school, academies, independent school and local authorities August 2020
  - DfE Children Missing Education statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016.
- 4.2 Schools have a statutory duty to keep two legal documents:
- An admissions register.
  - An attendance register which must be kept accurately.
- 4.3 An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.
- 4.4 Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with statutory requirements and government guidelines. Registers must be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Pupils are expected to be on time for both registration sessions. On each occasion the school must record whether a child is present, absent or present at an approved educational activity. No pupil should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called.

| <b>NAME OF ACADEMY</b>  | <b>AM<br/>REGISTRATION<br/>OPENS</b> | <b>AM<br/>REGISTRATION<br/>CLOSES</b> | <b>PM REGISTRATION<br/>OPENS</b> | <b>PM REGISTRATION<br/>CLOSES</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ROBERT SMYTH<br>ACADEMY | 8.45 AM                              | 9.15 AM                               | 1.35 PM                          | 2.05 PM                           |

- 4.5 Every half day of absence has to be classified by the Academy as either authorised or unauthorised, and the regulation codes must be used.
- 4.5.1 Authorised absence is where the Principal has either given approval in advance for any pupil (age 4 – 19) who attends the Academy to be absent or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. Examples of authorised absence include days of religious observance, illness and medical appointments (where possible these must be arranged after school), all of which require written confirmation from a parent/carers.
- 4.5.2 Unauthorised absence is when the justification is not acceptable or when a reason for the absence has not been received. Excessive lateness will also be recorded as unauthorised absence. Examples of unauthorised absence include shopping, birthdays or child minding.
- 4.6 Spaces must not be left in the register. It is the responsibility of the member of staff taking the register to ensure the register is complete at tutor time, and for all lessons. In the event

of the electronic registration system failing, a paper register must be taken and be submitted to the person within the school responsible for updating electronic registers.

- 4.7 Pupils must not mark the register in any circumstances because it is a legal and auditable document.
- 4.8 All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis. This is a collective responsibility, involving Tutors/Class Teachers, Senior Leaders, Administrators and the Attendance Welfare Officer. Robert Smyth Academy has a procedure in place to resolve unexplained absences as soon as possible, however no later than 5 working days after the session of absence.
- 4.9 If a pupil is absent from school their parent/carer should contact the Academy on the first day of absence and maintain daily contact throughout the absence.
- 4.10 Reasons for absence, either verbal or supported by written notes from a parent/carer, may not always be accepted as a satisfactory reason for the absence. If this is the case, the Academy will make formal representation to the parent/carer in writing to challenge the reason for absence they provided.
- 4.11 In exceptional circumstances the Academy will request further evidence of a pupil's illness. This request will be put in writing to the pupil's parents/carers.
- 4.12 Parents/carers are advised to make appointments for a dentist, doctor or optician outside school core hours whenever possible.
- 4.13 If a pupil is absent from school and no reason has been received and no contact can be made with the parent/carer, and there is a cause for concern, the Attendance Welfare Officer or a nominated member of staff will make a home visit. If there is no response from the home visit and the concern persists the matter will be raised immediately with the safeguarding team.
- 4.14 If a reason for absence has been received and there is a concern regarding that reason, the Attendance Welfare Officer or a nominated member of staff will make a home visit. If there is no response from the home visit and the concern persists, the matter will be raised immediately with the safeguarding team.

## **5 Lateness**

- 5.1 Pupils must attend registration on time to be given a present mark. Arrival after the start of morning registration but before the close will be given an 'L' code and an appropriate sanction will be given in accordance to the Academy's Behaviour and Standards Policy. Registers close 30 minutes after the start of morning registration, if pupils arrive after this time they will be given an unauthorised absence 'U' code in the register. Afternoon registration will remain open for 30 minutes after the start of registration. Any pupil that arrives after the start of afternoon registration will be marked as 'L' Late in the register. Any pupil that arrives after the afternoon registers have closed will be marked as 'U' unauthorised absence.
- 5.2 It is the initial responsibility of the Class Teacher within primary schools and the Tutor and College Leader within secondary schools to address the issue of persistent lateness with the student and their parent/carer. Pupils who arrive late without a genuine reason will be given a sanction in accordance with the Academy's Behaviour and Standards policy.
- 5.3 In the circumstances of a pupil being persistently late before the close of the register, the Academy's sanctions having no effect on the lateness and the parents/carers failing to support the Academy by ensuring that their child arrives on time to the Academy, then the parents/carers will be informed in writing that these late arrivals will be recorded as unauthorised absences and they will be made aware of the consequences of this action.

## **6 Poor attendance**

- 6.1 Those pupils whose attendance falls below 95% will be closely monitored and further action considered. Between 95% and 93% it is the responsibility of the Tutor/Class Teacher to discuss the matter with the pupil and the parent/carer in consultation with the College Leader/Head of School and administrative staff. Attendance of 93% and below will require further intervention, all intervention must be documented.
- 6.2 If a pupil has three individual periods of absence in any period of six weeks, the Academy's Attendance Welfare Officer within secondary schools and Head of School within primary schools will contact the parents/carers to discuss the absences. Recognition of a pattern of absence is vital. Liaison between Class Teacher and Head of School within primary schools, and Tutor, College Administrator and College Leader within secondary schools, with support from the Attendance Welfare Officer, will ensure a holistic approach to the cause for concern. Early involvement of the parent/carer is paramount.
- 6.3 Robert Smyth Academy has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding a pupil's attendance at the Academy. Below is a list of interventions that may be implemented by the Academy alongside our escalation process:
- Telephone calls to parents/carers
  - Letters to parents/carers
  - Home visits (these can be pre-arranged or cold call visits)
  - Meetings with parents/carers and pupils to discuss any issues
  - School mentoring
  - Parenting/guardianship contracts
  - Pastoral Support Plan
  - Consideration to be given for referral to external support agencies, in conjunction with the LA.
  - Individual Educational Plan
  - Personal Attendance Plan
  - Utilisation of Trust AWO, as a means to escalate
- 6.4 If there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance following the Academy's interventions, the Academy will refer the matter to the Local Authority for advice and possible legal action.
- 6.5 The legal action to be considered, in full consultation with the Academy, is:
- to prosecute a parent/carer for failing to ensure that their child regularly attends school according to the statutory requirement through the Education Act 1996, Section 444 (1 or 1A);
  - application to a magistrate's court for an Education Supervision Order – to ensure that the child of compulsory school age and registered at a school attends regularly;
  - application to a magistrate's court for a Parenting Order – to enforce regular attendance following a successful prosecution by the Local Authority;
  - to issue a Penalty Notice of a monetary fine for irregular attendance and unauthorised leave of absence.

## **7 Leave of absence during term time**

- 7.1 In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 amendment of the 2006 Regulations, TGAT will comply with the amendment in that the Principal/Head of School will not authorise a leave of absence unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

- 7.2 The Principal/Head of School will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- 7.3 TGAT has a responsibility to safeguard every child on roll at the Academy and therefore a Leave of Absence form must be completed in all circumstances, at least three weeks before the planned leave, and submitted to the office for the Principal/Head of School's decision.
- 7.4 The Principal/Head of School can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the residential parent, i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- 7.5 A letter confirming that the Leave of Absence form has been received and stating the Principal/Head of School's decision will be sent to parents within seven days of receipt of the Leave of Absence form.
- 7.6 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- 7.7 All matters of unauthorised absence related to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the School Attendance Services at the Academy's named Local Authority / County Council for them to consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice for Leave of Absence in line with their Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of this can be found on the relevant Local Authority website).
- 7.8 The Academy will inform parents/carers of the possibility of the pupil's removal from the Academy roll, once safeguarding checks have been made and the issue has been referred to the Local Authority, if the pupil does not return on the agreed date and no reasonable explanation is provided.
- 7.9 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that notice, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.
- 7.10 Academy registers will be marked as follows:

**H (authorised absence)** for any agreed period of holiday leave. Principals/Heads of School should not grant Leave of Absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Principal/Head of School must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a Leave of Absence is granted, the Principal/Head of School will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A Leave of Absence is granted entirely at the Principal/Head of School's discretion.

**G (unauthorised absence)** if the holiday absence has not been authorised by the school, or for days taken in excess of an agreed period. If the Academy does not authorise a Leave of Absence for the purpose of a holiday, but the parents/carers still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow academies to give retrospective approval. If the parents/carers did not apply for Leave of Absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

## **8 Overseas extended trips**

- 8.1 Parents/carers may wish to take their child/children on an extended overseas trip during term time. Such visits may be particularly important to parents/carers who want to ensure that their child/children meet members of their extended family overseas. Whilst it is important to recognise the educational and cultural significance of such visits, the Leave of Absence during term time rules (Section 7) also apply to these circumstances.

- 8.2 The Education Regulations 2006 state that where a pupil has been granted an extended 'Leave of Absence' and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable causes, his/her name may be deleted from the admissions register. This would only be considered following consultation with the Local Authority Children Missing Education Officer, and once the missing child's procedure has been followed.

## **9 Travellers**

- 9.1 There is provision within the legislation to permit Travellers to remove their child/children from full-time education whilst they are travelling, however this can only be done after the completion of 200 sessions (100 days) in an academic year. The parent/carer should be encouraged to attend school and discuss the pending period of absence with the Tutor/College Leader/Class Teacher prior to removing the child. It is at the discretion of the Principal/Head of School whether or not to authorise this absence. Should permission be granted, 'T' will be entered into the student register system.

## **10 Leave of Absence Requests**

- 10.1 This form should be completed and submitted to your child's Principal at least 3 weeks before the start of the proposed leave of absence. Separate forms should be completed for each child.
- 10.2 Parents/carers are reminded that Leave of Absence taken without permission, or not returning on the stated date may result in the issuing of an education penalty fine by the Local Authority of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child on prosecution in the magistrates' court.
- 10.3 Parents/carers are also reminded that due to the changes in government regulations from September 2013 that Leave of Absence for the purpose of holidays in term time can no longer be granted except in exceptional circumstances.

## **11 Sixth Form Attendance**

- 11.1 In addition to timetabled lessons, sixth form students have timetabled study periods for independent study. Students may wish to study at home during these periods. We expect students to be committed to spending their time effectively, but this privilege may be withdrawn if a student is not meeting attendance expectations or work commitments. In such cases, students will be scheduled to work within school.
- 11.2 TGAT has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding a student's attendance at the Academy. Further details can be found in section 6.3.
- 11.3 In addition to the above, a meeting will be held with the Head of Sixth Form, and subject teachers where appropriate, where there are concerns around attendance or persistent lateness, to discuss issues or barriers that may be impacting attendance. If poor attendance or punctuality continues, this may be formalised and actions agreed in writing in a Personal Attendance Plan (PAP).
- 11.4 Failure to engage in these intervention procedures, or where attendance at the Academy or to lessons remains a concern and is below 85%, discussions may be held in relation to the suitability of a sixth form placement at the Academy. This may result in a final written warning if non-attendance persists without a genuine reason or circumstance to explain this level of absence.



## 12 Remote Education

- 12.1 In cases where it is not possible, or is contrary to government guidance, for some or all pupils to attend school, it may be necessary for schools to provide high quality remote education. Remote education should only ever be considered as a last resort where a decision has already been made that attendance at school is not possible, but pupils are able to continue learning.
- 12.2 Schools should refer to the non-statutory guidance [Providing remote education, January 2023 \(DfE\)](#) while working closely with pupils, parents and carers, as well as with any other relevant partners such as the Local Authority, to remove any barriers to attendance.
- 12.3 Pupils receiving remote education still need to be marked as absent in the register in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance, May 2022 (DfE).
- 12.4 Circumstances where remote education should be considered fall into two broad categories:
- School closures or restrictions on attendance, where school access for pupils is restricted.
  - Individual cases where a pupil is unable to attend school but is able to learn; these circumstances should only involve a short-term absence, for example a pupil recovering from a short-term infectious illness, operation or injury.
- 12.5 In some exceptional cases, these circumstances may also include pupils whose attendance has been affected by a special educational need or disability (SEND) or a mental health issue. Remote education should be considered on a case-by-case basis as part of a plan to reintegrate the pupil back to school and as a short-term solution.
- 12.6 For individual cases, if the pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a social worker, the Local Authority should be involved in the decision to provide remote education.

Leave of Absence Request Form

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name of child  |  |
| Tutor Group/Class  |  |
| Name of parent/guardian  |  |
| Address  |  |
| Telephone number   |  |
| Email  |  |
| Start date of proposed leave of absence  |  |
| End date of proposed leave of absence  |  |
| Place of destination   |  |
| Contact name and number of someone who is not travelling with you in case of emergency         |  |
| Reasons for request: <i>(Please state why you consider there are exceptional circumstance)</i> |  |

Signed:

Date:

**Leave of Absence Request Acceptance Letter**

Our reference:

Parent / Guardian Address

Date

Dear

Re: Request for leave for (Pupil's name - D.O.B) during the period (date) to (date). Thank you for your request for a leave of absence for the purpose of (give details).

I have considered your request and can advise that I am willing to grant a leave of absence for (Pupil name) between the above dates.

(Pupil name) will therefore be expected to return to the Academy on (date), at the normal time.

Please be aware that should your child fail to return to the Academy on that date, any further absence from school will be unauthorised. This could result in us referring the matter to the Local Authority which may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child.

In the event of unforeseen circumstances arising which will prevent your child returning on the above date, please contact the Academy immediately.

Yours sincerely

Principal/Head of School

**Leave of Absence Request Partial Acceptance Letter**

Our reference:

Parent / Guardian Address

Date

Dear

Re: Request for leave for (Pupil's name - D.O.B) during the period (date) to (date).

Thank you for your request for leave of absence for the purpose of (give details).

I have considered your request and can confirm that I am not able to grant a leave of absence for (Pupil name) for the whole of the period requested. Whilst I understand your reasons for making this request, I have to be mindful of my duties to maintain the good attendance of all our pupils. I do not consider your reasons for removing (Pupil name) from school on this occasion to be exceptional circumstances sufficient that I am able to grant term time leave. I am sorry for any distress this may cause you or your family.

Permission is granted (Pupil name) to be absent from (date) until (date) only.

(Pupil name) will therefore be expected to return to the Academy on (date), at the normal time.

Please be aware that should your child fail to return to the Academy on that date, any further absence from school will be unauthorised. This could result in us referring the matter to the Local Authority which may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child.

In the event of unforeseen circumstances arising which will prevent your child returning on the above date, please contact the Academy immediately.

Yours sincerely

Principal/Head of School

**Leave of Absence Request Denial Letter**

Our reference:

Parent / Guardian Address

Date

Dear

Re: Request for leave for (Pupil's name - D.O.B) during the period (date) to (date). Thank you for your request for a leave of absence for the purpose of (give details).

I have considered your request and regret to inform you that I am not willing to grant a leave of absence on this occasion. Whilst I understand your reasons for making this request, I have to be mindful of my duties to maintain the good attendance of all our pupils. I do not consider your reasons for removing (Pupil name) from school on this occasion to be exceptional circumstances sufficient that I am able to grant term time leave. I am sorry for any distress this may cause you or your family.

(Pupil name)'s full attendance at school during the above period is therefore required as normal, and I must advise you if he/she does not attend school during this period the absences will be recorded as unauthorised and could result in us referring the matter to the Local Authority and this may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child.

Yours sincerely

Principal/Head of School

## **Suspected Unauthorised Absence Letter**

Our reference:

Parent / Guardian Address

Date

Dear

Re: Pupil Name – D.O.B

Unauthorised Absence from the Academy between (dates)

I am writing to you with regard to (Pupil name)'s absences from the Academy between the above dates as it has come to our attention that he/she was absent as a result of a leave of absence taken without permission.

As the Academy had not given permission for (Pupil name) to be absent from the Academy during these dates, and authorisation cannot be granted in retrospect we are recording the absences as unauthorised and this could result in us referring the matter to the Local Authority which may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that in accordance with current regulations, leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. A request for a leave of absence can be granted if the Academy is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances that have led to this request. Please contact the Academy if we can be of any assistance in the future regarding requests for leave of absence.

Yours sincerely

Principal/Head of School