

UNDER-16 ATTENDANCE POLICY

School Attendance Regulations for Under 16-Year Olds

“All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other arrangements. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.”

Advice and guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on managing pupil attendance

(DCSF September 2006)

The Aims of our Attendance Policy

- To ensure that Cardiff Academy is compliant with national [Welsh] Regulations and Guidance for recording under-16 student attendance and absence;
- To ensure all under-16 students at Cardiff Academy attend College for the maximum number of sessions possible;
- To ensure staff and parents are aware of procedures to be followed as a consequence of absence of students under 16 at Cardiff Academy;
- To ensure that any absence is monitored and followed up immediately
- To ensure that any **unauthorised** absence is pursued by the College in the first instance and, if necessary, by the Education Welfare Service;
- To ensure that under-16 students attending off-site activities are registered at all times;
- Schools & Colleges admitting under 16 students are required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
- The register must show whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.
- The admission register and the attendance register of every school or College must be available for inspection during school or College hours by any of HMI in Wales [Estyn].

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Registers for Pupils Under 16 Years of Age

- If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- Registers must be kept for at least three years.
- Registers are legal documents which may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance.
- Registers provide the daily record of attendance for all students and this information can act as an early warning system for issues which may affect a child's welfare including child protection, being a young carer, illegal child employment, truancy, disaffection with school, special educational needs, illness, problems in school etc.
- Registers provide information where regular and punctual attendance may be part of a planned action by The Academy to ensure regular attendance, or to support children at home when regular attendance

may be one of the goals set within a child protection plan for a child who is registered on the Child Protection Register.

- Registers also contribute information to reports and to leavers' references.

Principles

- Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole College and its staff.
- The College will promote good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials & good attendance will be noted & praised.
- All under 16 students should be at College, on time, every day the College is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.
- Sometimes a student may be reluctant to attend College. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved, in the first instance, between the College, the parents and the child.
- Permitting absence from College without a good reason is an offence by the parent.
- In the case of under 16 students, Cardiff Academy has a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent / student or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.
- If a student of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from College has to be classified by the College, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.
- Only Cardiff Academy can authorise the absence, **not** parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.
- **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from College for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.
- **Unauthorised absences** are those which the College does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. These include: parents keeping students away from College unnecessarily; truancy before or during the College day; absences which have never been properly explained; students who arrive too late to get a mark.
- Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact Mrs. Davies or Dr. Wilson at an early stage and work together with the appropriate staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful.
- If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, however, the College has a legal duty refer the case to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the College and will give impartial advice.

Procedures

In the case of students who are under 16 years of age, Cardiff Academy applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. Illness and Other Legitimate Reasons

- If a student is unfit for College, parents are asked to contact us on the **first** day of absence by 9.30 am. Parents are asked to inform The Academy either by letter or phone if their child is absent.
- When the student returns, he or she should also bring a **written note**, signed by the parent for each period of absence. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.
- In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a student's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested.
- Other reasons for absence must be discussed with Dr. Wilson and/or Mrs. Davies each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. It is not appropriate, for example, for us to authorise absences for such things as shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdresser's appointments, etc. Leave may, of course, be granted in the case of a real emergency or for medical appointments which cannot be made outside the College day.

2. Holidays

- We strongly advise parents against taking children out of College in term time.
- Students at Cardiff Academy get 17 weeks' holiday per year compared with 13 weeks in State Schools. Students are therefore expected to be in College for the remaining 35 weeks. Education is vital and should not be halted to go on holiday.
- We ask parents who decide they must take a holiday during term time to make this request in writing.
- If a parent makes such a request, certain factors will be taken into consideration:
 - The year group of the child
 - Previous attendance record
 - Whether there is coursework outstanding
 - The reason given for the holiday
- Amongst the times when the The Academy will not authorise a holiday are: any time in the the run-up to public examinations – i.e. Year 11 GCSEs; at the start of Year 10 when pupils are just starting their Option subjects; during Year 11 mock GCSEs in December.

3. Lateness

- Students must attend on time to be given a mark for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable.
- Lateness will also be recorded and, again, will be recorded as unauthorised unless the College has been informed of, and agreed to authorise the reasons given.
- Parents are expected to ensure that pupils are present for the first session of the day.