



**Focus 1st Academy**

**Attendance Policy**

**Focus 1st Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment!**

Working in Partnership with North London Schools & Local Authorities Est. 2000

Accredited Independent School Status 2014 (Registration N0. 308/6003)

**Contents**

[Focus Inception 3](#_Toc185504887)

[Focus Ethos 3](#_Toc185504888)

[Attendance and Punctuality 4](#_Toc185504889)

[Introduction: 4](#_Toc185504890)

[Persistent Absence: 5](#_Toc185504891)

[The Legal Framework: 5](#_Toc185504892)

[Aims: 5](#_Toc185504893)

[How does our Lateness Record work? 6](#_Toc185504894)

[DISCIPLINARY ACTION FORM 7](#_Toc185504895)

[LATENESS RECORD 8](#_Toc185504896)

[Parental request to leave during term time 9](#_Toc185504897)

[Request for Leave During Term Time 10](#_Toc185504898)

[Illness and medical appointments 11](#_Toc185504899)

[Authorised Absences 11](#_Toc185504900)

[Unauthorised Absence 12](#_Toc185504901)

[Poor Attendance and punctuality 12](#_Toc185504902)

[Step 1: 12](#_Toc185504903)

[Step 2: 12](#_Toc185504904)

[Step 3: 12](#_Toc185504905)

[Rewards Scheme: 13](#_Toc185504906)

[Attendance Target: 13](#_Toc185504907)

[Equality statement: 13](#_Toc185504908)

[Rewards System 14](#_Toc185504909)

Focus Inception

*Focus 1st Academy was set up in the year 2000 using European Social Fund to provide education and training and to-date has defied all the odds and was awarded the Independent School status in August 2014. This enables us to work in partnership with schools and local authorities to provide an alternative method of education for 14 to 16 year olds. Our student referrals are some of the most vulnerable young people and it is our duty to ensure that they are equipped with the appropriate skills and qualifications to ensure full participation within the modern workplace. Our team of professionals consisting of tutors, tutor assistance, pastoral support staff and mentors to nurture the students ensuring our work-based-learning approach alongside a variety of techniques are utilised and compatible to ensure the prevention of social and economic exclusion prior to adulthood which is underpinned through the subjects delivered whilst in classroom environment as well as on an individual basis.*

Focus Ethos

*Our programme fulfils the need of students who are disengaged from academic studies and may be exhibiting behavioural problems as a result. Our hands-on approach to learning creates an inspirational motivation for students wishing to pursue a career via the vocational route. The students are taught methods on how to improve their social skills in preparation for work/apprenticeship schemes and/or further education by learning in real-life situations and participating in sports, art and drama to express emotions. We believe that all individuals have a certain quality, which is sometimes concealed due to lack of confidence, mixed sentiments or disabilities. As such, recognising and coming to terms with barriers is a small part of the conflict, we are certain that all individuals are aware of their own weaknesses; the most vital part is engaging with professionals and adhere to individual training plans set which in turn prepares our students for economic and social integration into adulthood.*

Attendance and Punctuality

Introduction:

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly (Education Act 1996 Section 7), with consideration of legal action against parents and carers who fail in this regard.

All students are expected to attend school as required and be punctual to their lessons in order to ensure that students gain maximum learning time and appropriate grades & qualifications that they are working towards.

97+ %Attendance + Effort = Success

Focus 1st Academy is responsible for supporting the attendance of its students dealing with problems which may lead to non-attendance (drawing on the support of external agencies as necessary).

We have a register in place that monitors attendance in all areas which closes at 9:45am during Lesson 1. Students will receive a late mark if they arrive after 9.30am. The lunchtime registers close at 1.30pm as the students should be ready to start lessons for 1.20pm. The class register is supervised by Kate Bowman (Assistant Head - Cheshunt), Danni Nolan (Welwyn) and Jasmine Storry (Arnos) who have the task of contacting the parents/guardian if their child is absent or late.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to telephone, provide a text message or email Focus 1st Academy when a student is absent. This should take place before a planned authorised absence or on the same day as the absence. The school operates a first day response to absence and we will text/telephone you, if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe that the safety of your child is paramount and it is the school’s responsibility to work in partnership with parents to ensure your child’s safety. Please ensure you inform the school if your contact details change.

If a student is seen leaving the premises during a school session or is not in a lesson

having been registered for the session, Kate Bowman (Cheshunt), Danni Nolan (Welwyn) and Jasmine Storry (Arnos) telephones the parents once it is clear that the student is not on the premises. Staff may be aware of truants because they have seen them in school earlier in the day, or may be suspicious of an absence.

We also have a lateness record form which is filled out every time a student arrives late into school, or late back from lunchbreak. The register of attendance is sent to school and/or borough that the student is attached to, by Kate Bowman (Cheshunt), Danni Nolan (Welwyn) or Jasmine Storry (Arnos), every Friday.

Persistent Absence:

Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement:

A student is classified as having persistent absence if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

* 7 or more sessions absence by the end of half term 1
* 14 or more sessions absence by the end of half term 2
* 20 or more sessions absence by the end of half term 3
* 25 or more sessions absence by the end of half term 4
* 31 or more sessions absence by the end of half term 5

The Legal Framework:

The Borough Policy, on which this policy is based, is mindful of the following:

* The Education Act 2011
* The Children Act 1989
* Children and Social Work Act 2017
* The Children and Young Persons Act, 2008
* The Education (Students' Attendance Records) Regulations, 1991 amendedn 2002
* The Education (Students' Registration - Amendment) Regulations, 2023
* Working together to improve school attendance 2022 updated 2024
* Social Inclusion - Student Support, DFE circulars
* Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools updated 2014
* Anti-social behaviour powers: statutory guidance for frontline professionals Updated March 2023
* The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Aims:

• Focus 1st Academy aims to create an inclusive, nurturing and welcoming ethos in which pupils are stimulated to grow in self-esteem and to experience success.

• We aim to encourage the educational development of all pupils by promoting the importance of school attendance.

• We will intervene when absence and punctuality fall below an acceptable standard.

• All staff aim to contribute to giving pupil attendance a high profile with clear procedures and expectations.

• Our school aims to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of individual pupils and positively encourages them to attend.

• Good attendance is enabled when effective partnerships are built between school

and home and there is clarity of expectation of the roles of each.

How does our Lateness Record work?

Students should always start their day in Focus 1st Academy by being in attendance between 9:00 and 9:30am (breakfast Club available). A student who arrives after 9:30 am, he/she will be recorded as late in our lateness record book unless a legitimate reason has been provided by parents/guardians.

The lunchtime registers close at 1:20pm as students should be in their class and ready to commence their lessons at 1:15pm.

\*If students that have an **Educational Health Care Plan** are having difficulties with attending or punctuality then we may be able to apply for travel assistance (fully funded) whereby a taxi will pick them up from home in the morning (time allowing to get them to Focus 1st Academy on time for 9:30am lesson) and return them back home after school finishes at Arnos Grove at 2:45pm Monday-Thursdays and 2:00pm Fridays. Cheshunt finish at 15:00 Monday-Thursday and Friday at 2:00pm. Welwyn at 3.00pm Monday – Thursday and 1.00pm on Friday.

Parental request to leave during term time

**Parents/Carers will be asked to:**

• Encourage their child to attend school regularly and on time.

• Arrange for routine visits to doctors, opticians etc. to be organised outside of school hours, where possible.

• Inform the school by telephone or email on the first day of absence before 9.00am, and every day after, with an explanation.

• Pass any absence letters notes to Marina Savva or Andrea Kattirtzi as soon as possible.

• Discuss unavoidable absences well in advance of the event. A holiday/leave of absence request should be requested in writing to the Headteacher.

Any parent/guardian requesting leave for their child will need to complete a Parental Request Form To Leave During Term Time. This will need to be approved by the Executive Headteacher, Marina Savva or Headteacher, Andrea Kattirtzi.

See below for an example of the form that will need to be completed.

Request for Leave During Term Time

**Request for Leave During Term Time – Sample**

Dear Ms Savva Date:

I request consideration for a grant of leave of absence from school during term-time for my son/daughter (Name)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Give reason for leave: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For the period from:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ To:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total number of school days: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of parent/guardians who will be with the child when the leave taken:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Authorised : Yes / No (Please circle)

By (name of staff member)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Focus 1st Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment!**

Illness and medical appointments

**Parents/Carers will be asked to:**

• Encourage their child to attend school regularly and on time.

• Arrange for routine visits to doctors, opticians etc. to be organised outside of school hours, where possible.

• Inform the school by telephone or email on the first day of absence before 9.00am, and every day after, with an explanation.

• Pass any absence letters to Kate Bowman as soon as possible.

• Discuss unavoidable absences well in advance of the event. A holiday/leave of absence request should be requested in writing to the Headteacher.

Medical appointments must be shown to us by either a card, letter or a note from parent/guardian.

Authorised Absences

**Absence will be authorised for:**

• Genuine sickness

• Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (whenever possible these should be made outside school hours)

• Exceptional family circumstances

• Formal exclusion from school

• Family bereavement.

• An interview with a prospective employer, higher education institution or at another school.

• Study leave granted by the Headteacher.

• Religious observance (1 day only will be authorised)

Unauthorised Absence

**Absence will not be authorised for:**

• Truancy

• Arrival (without justified reason) after registration period has closed

• No explanation being provided by the parent/carer.

• The school is dissatisfied with the explanation for absence

• Looking after family members (except in exceptional circumstances)

• Staying at home to mind the house, await deliveries or look after sibling/siblings or other family members

• Birthdays or other similar events

• Any work (paid or unpaid) undertaken during school hours (except formal work experience approved by the school)

• Day trips or a family holiday during term time which has not been agreed.

Poor Attendance and punctuality

Step 1:

A telephone call home will be made on the day of absence. If we receive no response, we will continue to call for 5 days.

Step 2:

In the case of still no response we would send home a letter of absence asking for the reason for not attending school and to contact us as a matter of urgency.

Step 3:

If after 10 days, we do not receive a response, after the 10th day we will complete a home visit.

Step 4:

Following our home visit and if the child fails to return to school, we would make a referral to the LA attendance team for further support.

We are reluctant to reach this stage and try to work with families prior to getting to the stage whereby the LA need to get involved.

Punctuality: If a student has more than 2 unexplained late arrivals in a week, we will contact the parents to create a plan to ensure the child attends school on time. If this continues and further lateness’s are incurred, then we will invite the parent/guardian in for a meeting and other professionals involved to support and invoke a plan of action.

Rewards Scheme:

We have a reward scheme in place to entice students to do better and reach their maximum potential. Rewards are given for,

* Completing all work set
* Acts of kindness [towards Students, Staff, Colleagues albeit in School, Work-placements and General Public]
* Good Behaviour
* Polite/Courteous
* Outstanding Attendance
* Improved Punctuality
* Improvement in Attendance

We also display stars on the wall against their name as a sign of recognition for doing well. At the end of each term the students who have received enough stars will go onto the termly reward trip.

Attendance Target:

The school attendance target is 96% each year.

Equality statement:

Focus 1st Academy staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all students, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background, by ensuring high levels of school attendance and full access to the curriculum for all.

Last reviewed June 2021

Last Reviewed June 2022

Last Reviewed August 2023

Last Reviewed September 2024

Last Reviewed November 2024

Last reviewed July 2025