



**DOGSTHORPE
ACADEMY**

Attendance Policy

Approved by: S Lloyd

Date: 01/10/2023

Next review due by: 01/09/24

Introduction

Dogsthorpe Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils. We believe it is extremely important for pupils to attend regularly and on time. This will ensure that they have the best opportunity to progress and succeed at school.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is parents/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from school, without a good reason may result in prosecution.

At Dogsthorpe Academy we:

- provide a welcoming and caring environment where all members of The Academy feel secure and valued.
- expect students to arrive on time every day.
- will support parents/carers with their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- believe a leave of absence should not be taken during term-time. We will not authorise requests for leave of absence during term-time, except in exceptional/unavoidable circumstances.

How to notify the Academy of an absence

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or unavoidable circumstances, please contact the academy, by 8.30am, on each day of absence.

- Telephone: 01733 343581
- Text Groupcall: 07860003898
- Email: admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org

Please state your child's name, class and reason for absence.

To inform us about a planned absence:

Please inform us of any planned absence in advance, this includes unavoidable medical appointments during the school day. To inform us about a planned absence: Call or email the school office. You may also come into the Academy and speak to a member of the office team.

1. Aim

Ensuring all pupils have high attendance is a key priority of the Academy. Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, and we know that pupils with high attendance do better at school than those with high absence rates. We also know that absence can be a sign of other risks in a young person's life.

The aim of this document is to set out how we create and maintain a positive culture that supports and values good attendance.

It includes how we:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality
- Follow up absences.
- Communicate and work with families to reduce absence.
- Monitor absences and analyse patterns of absence.
- Work with local partners to support high attendance and reduce absence.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of GAT's Attendance Policy. The Trust policy details the relevant legislation and guidance documents. In particular, this policy carefully follows DfE guidance in this area. Our work on attendance is linked closely to our approaches to safeguarding and behaviour.

3. How we promote a culture of high expectations in attendance and punctuality

At Dogsthorpe Academy we:

- Believe in building strong partnerships with families.
- Create a warm and welcome academy that welcomes pupils and their families.
- Ensure senior staff and members of the inclusion team maintain a high profile and are ready to speak to parents/carers about any issues with school attendance.
- Prioritise first day calls and absence follow up calls to give parents/carers the opportunity to discuss any issues that are affecting attendance and offer advice.

If a pupil has had a significant absence, then a re-integration meeting may be held to discuss any adjustments which may be needed.

4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Pupils must arrive at school between 08:35am and 08:45am. Pupils arriving after this time, but before the register is closed at 8.55am, will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after 8.55 will be marked as late after the register is closed. This will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U). Pupils arriving after 8.45am must use the main entrance. The register closes ten minutes after the start of the afternoon session.

Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at a school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, this means their child must attend every day the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence, by the academy, in advance.

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Contact the academy to report their child's absence before 08:45am and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the academy with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and on time .
- Go straight to their classroom.

Class teachers will:

- Record attendance twice daily, using the correct codes. This information must be submitted ten minutes after the start of each session.

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/ carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Providing regular attendance reports to staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the principal.
- Working with Peterborough City Council Attendance service to tackle persistent absence.

The Attendance Officer can be contacted by:

Telephone: 01733 343581

Email: admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org

The Inclusion Lead is responsible for:

Leading attendance across the academy.

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Evaluating and monitoring processes.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with Family members to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Working with local partners to implement bespoke strategies to improve attendance for those children with persistent absence or severe absence.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs F Massingham. She can be contacted by:

- Telephone: 01733 343581
- Email: admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org

The principal is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy.
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to The Trust.
- Monitoring the impact of processes and attendance strategies.
- Monitoring the impact of work with local partners to improve attendance in identified cases.
- Working with local partners when formal procedures such as parental contracts, supervision orders and penalty notices are required.

The principal can be contacted by:

- Telephone: 01733 343581
- Email: admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org

5. Recording attendance

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will use the DfE codes to detail the attendance and absences. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the academy of their child's absence by 8.45am. (Refer to Page One.)

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the academy may ask the pupil's parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the academy is not satisfied with the authenticity or the reason, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be marked as authorised, if the pupil's parents/carers notify the academy before the appointment. We encourage medical and dental appointments to be made out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents/carers must request other term-time absence as far in advance as possible. Leave of absence forms are available on the academy website, by email or as a paper copy available from the academy office. They should be completed at least four weeks before any leave is taken; evidence will be required.

Section 6 details the term-time absences the academy can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked using the L (late) code.
- After the register has closed will be marked using the U (unauthorised absence) code.

The attendance officer will contact parents/carers of pupils who are persistently late. They will be invited to attendance meetings to identify any barriers and offer support where required.

Percy or Polly the Punctuality Parrots will be at the gate periodically to reward those arriving to school on time.

Following up unexplained absence

- Where any pupil we expect to attend does not, or stops attending without reason, the academy will:
- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency

contacts, the academy may make a home visit. If this is not successful, then the police may be asked to undertake a safe and well check.

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If an absence continues, the academy will consider involving LA children's social care.

Reporting to parents/ carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in parent consultation evenings and in the annual report to parents. If the attendance officer is concerned about a pupil's attendance they will make contact by telephone or in person to discuss this in the first instance. This will be followed up by letters if attendance does not improve.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. We define exceptional circumstances as a one-off, significant event that cannot realistically take place at another time.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the academy website and available from the academy. Evidence will be required to support any request for leave of absence.

- Valid reasons for authorised absence may include:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Appointments for passport and visa matters
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentation from a senior officer of the company or organisation.
- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon/ a tour of duty abroad.

It should be noted that financial considerations are not deemed exceptional circumstances.

Family holidays should not be taken in term time as they damage progress and continuity of learning. We will not authorise any holidays, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Legal sanctions

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or not appropriate (such as an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority can take forward legal intervention to formalise support and / or enforce attendance. This includes fines or a penalty notice. The arrangements for these procedures are found here
<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/attendance>

7. How we monitor attendance

Monitoring attendance

- The Academy will:
- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the academy and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- The attendance officer will contact parents/carers of children whose attendance is a concern and discuss the reasons for it. If these initial discussions reveal any underlying issues which require support referrals to other agencies such as the school nursing service may be made.
- The academy will use Peterborough City Council attendance service guidance and letter templates to follow up attendance concerns.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term by the trust and DfE and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The academy will compare attendance data to the trust and national average.

Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school (for whatever reason), and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school, again for whatever reason.

The academy will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence. Send letters to inform parents of their child's attendance level giving them the opportunity to talk to staff about any barriers to reducing absence.

Hold regular meetings school attendance meeting with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, at risk of or persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance such as school nursing service and early help services.

Work with the LA to issue penalty notices for repeated unauthorised absence or for unauthorised leave of absence.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the trust or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the academy's Education Director.