



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Dogsthorpe Academy

Attendance policy



DOGSTHORPE
ACADEMY

Approved by:	Vicki Redhead, Executive principal	Date: 01/09/24
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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 give them the best opportunity to progress and succeed at school.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent / carer's 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 in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- believe 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 school on each day of absence by telephoning the school office on 01733 343581, text groupcall on 07860 003898 or email admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org. Please do not advise of absence on Class Dojo.
- 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, please complete a leave of absence form which can be obtained from the school office.

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.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

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 aim to:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

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

Senior leaders and attendance officer welcome pupils and families at the gate

Staff build partnerships with families, listen to them and try to understand barriers to attendance.

Pupils who have been absent are welcomed back at the gate.

Pupils who have had a long absence are helped to reintegrate into their peer group.

The academy recognises good attendance with termly and yearly certificates.

Class weekly attendance is celebrated with a 'Mr Potato Head' initiative. Each class collects pieces to build Mr Potato Head, resulting in a class reward for good attendance.

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 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 in advance from the academy.

(Note - where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them))

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Contact the academy on 01733 343581 or admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs J Bennett – Attendance Officer, who can be contacted via 01733 343581 or admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org.

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The executive principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the academy
- 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

- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the Academy's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance champion is the Assistant principal responsible for Inclusion, Mrs F Massingham who can be contacted via 01733 343581 or admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring absences are coded correctly on registers
- 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 parents and pupils to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Mrs J Bennett and can be contacted via 01733 343581 or admin@dogsthorpeacademy.org

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the attendance officer electronically.

Our 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 Mrs Bennett in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

5. Recording attendance

We will keep an electronic 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.

We will use the national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by emailing or calling the academy office.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental 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 or the absence is longer than 3 days the academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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. In some cases we may make a home visit.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. A leave of absence form is available from the academy office.

Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Late arrivals must be signed in at the office by a parent/carer. Parents will be contacted by the attendance officer if there is regular lateness.

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.
- 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 absence continues, the academy will consider involving other agencies.

Reporting to parents/ carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Attendance is discussed at parents evenings and on the annual report. Where there is concern parents will be contacted by letter or invited to a meeting.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The executive principal and/or Head of Academy can only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). A leave of absence is granted at their discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

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, available from the academy office. Evidence may be required to support any request for leave of absence.

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

Legal sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions including, but not limited to, penalty notices, to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-

by-case basis and we will use the local authority arrangements for doing so. The local code of conduct can be found [HERE](#)

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The attendance team will work with families to remove any barriers to school attendance and to access any support required from other agencies.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The attendance team work closely with the academy SENDco to ensure good attendance for pupils with SEN and health conditions.

The team can request the local authority to provide support where pupils are absent long term due to a medical condition or treatment.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the academy must inform the local authority.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Pupils who have been absent for a lengthy period are welcomed back to school and may be given an induction session if procedures/classes have changed.

8. 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

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.

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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead, and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings 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 mental health support teams and Early Help services.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the trust or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Executive Principal.