



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Danesholme Infant and Junior Academies

Attendance policy



DANESHOLME
ACADEMIES

Approved by:

Vicci Godbold

Date: October 2022

Last reviewed on:

October 2022

Next review due by:

September 2023

Introduction

Danesholme Infant and Junior Academies are 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 Danesholme Infant and Junior Academies 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 Academy on each day of absence by calling and leaving a message on 01536 741657 (Juniors) or 01536 741732 (Infants) or you can email admin@danesholmejunioracademy.org or admin@danesholmeinfantacademy.org

Please inform us of any planned absence in advance, this includes unavoidable medical appointments during the school day. Evidence of the medical appointment will be needed.

To inform us about a planned absence you must complete a leave of absence form which can be found on the Academy Website.

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

We value to importance of good attendance and punctuality. We encourage and support this by building partnerships with families, listening to them, and understanding any barriers to attendance. We employ a range of support and strategies to ensure families understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Children who have had absences are supported to reintegrate them into school and learning.

4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Gates are opened by 8:40 am

Pupils must arrive in school between 8:45am and 8:55am on each school day. Classroom doors will be opened at 8:45am

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken within 10 minutes of the afternoon session starting.

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.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time

- › Contact the Academy on 01536 741657 (Juniors) or 01536 741732 (Infants) or you can email admin@danesholmejunioracademy.org or admin@danesholmeinfantacademy.org to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and if possible 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

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis using SIMS, or paper registers when SIMS is not available, using only / or N, and submitting/sending this information to the office by 9:15 am

Office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/ carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the Academy system
- › Review registers from 9:15am.
- › Send absence text messages sent to all un-explained absences by 9:30am
- › Absence phone calls made in addition to or instead of text messages to identified vulnerable cohort (as identified by Head of Academy)
- › Confirm with Head of Academy any absence codes when not reported illness
- › Notify Head of Academy / Pastoral manager of vulnerable children absence by 9:30am
- › Follow up any un-reported absences via phone call before midday.

The Head of Academy/Pastoral Manager is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- › Providing regular attendance reports to staff
- › Working with EIP team to tackle persistent absence
- › 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 parents 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 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.

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

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the Academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by emailing / calling the Academy /office

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 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.

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 in advance.

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 and provides suitable evidence.

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 via a form on the Academy website

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 (9:15am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed (after 9:15am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. This will affect a pupils overall attendance figure.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend does not, or stops attending without reason, the Academy will:

- › Text and/ or 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 conduct a home visit, contact social care and/or Police.
- › 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 the Education Inclusion Partnership Team or similar.

Reporting to parents/ carers

The Academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, through regular communication via the Class Teacher, at Parents' Evenings and through annual reports. Termly attendance reports may be sent out when needed.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Head of Academy 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 Head of Academy's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school websites. Evidence may be required to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments
- › 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

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 very 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 <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/information-for-school-staff/pupil-support-and-inclusion/attendance-and-behaviour/Pages/support-with-a-child's-attendance-issues.aspx>

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

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, 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 (strengthening families, Early Help Assessment (EHA), Mental Health Support Team (MHST), Education Inclusion Partnership Team (EIP) etc.

8. 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. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Academy's Education Director.