



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Danesholme Infant and Junior Academies

Attendance policy



Approved by:

Vicci Godbold

Date: September 2024

Last reviewed on:

September 2024

Next review due by:

September 2025

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 requested from the school offices.

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:

- › 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. 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 well 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. (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/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.
- › Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the class teacher initially or Head of Academy, who can be contacted via 01536 741657 (Juniors) or 01536 741732 (Infants) or you can email admin@danesholmejunioracademy.org or admin@danesholmeinfantacademy.org

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 9:05 am

The Head of Academy and 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 for 2024 / 2025 is the Head of Academy

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

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 9.05am.
- Send absence text messages to all unexplained absences by 9.30am.
- Absence phone class 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/Safeguarding team of vulnerable children absence by 9.30am.
- Follow up any unreported absences via phone call before midday.

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 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 9am or as soon as practically possible by emailing / 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. A home visit will also take place on day 3.

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 via a form available from the 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 (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 figures.
- › We will work with families where lateness is an issue to establish any barriers to punctuality and ways to overcome them.

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 an education welfare officer 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 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' and if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). 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. 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

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.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

In supporting pupils facing complex barriers to attendance, it is paramount to work closely with families. Communication, empathy, and tailored support are key in overcoming these challenges. By fostering partnerships with families and implementing targeted strategies, we can effectively address in-school barriers and promote student well-being and engagement.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

In supporting pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND, we collaborate closely with families to understand their specific needs. The school may provide additional adjustments such as personalised learning plans and remote learning resources. Furthermore, we offer extra support through referrals to external services and targeted interventions to ensure a smooth transition back to school.

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

In supporting pupils re-integrating into school post an extended or unavoidable absence, our approach emphasises open communication with families. Collaboratively devising a re-entry plan catered to the individual needs of the student ensures a smooth transition. Regular updates and feedback maintain a supportive home-school partnership to aid in the child's successful return to learning.

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 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:

- › 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 teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- › 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 (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 Head of Academy / Executive Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the academy's Education Director.