



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Mansfield Primary Academy

Attendance Policy



MANSFIELD
PRIMARY
ACADEMY

Approved by:	D Jane	Date: 10.10.22
Last reviewed on:	10.10.22	
Next review due by:	10.10.23	

Introduction

Mansfield Primary 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 Mansfield Primary 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 01623 624709.

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 exceptional absences form which can be located in the school office or be requested from the school office to be sent via email to you.

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 analyze patterns of absence
- Work with local partners to support attendance and support reduction in 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

- Clear communication regarding the attendance procedure and expectations of the Academy
- Maintenance of thorough attendance data
- Clear registration practices
- Follow up of absences and lateness where communication to the Academy has not been received from parents /carers - first-day absence phone call initially, followed by a home visit.
- Informing parents /carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- Maintaining systematic tracking of daily attendance/lateness
- Reporting to Targeted Support where attendance requires involvement with a child
- Communication with all shareholders; Parents, Greenwood Academies Trust, Local Authority, and Government about attendance
- Consistently administer agreed attendance procedure
- Enforcement of Government guidelines regarding authorisation of holidays within term time and the implementation of fines
- Implement a set target of rewards for good attendance

4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am and this is the start of the school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:45pm.

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 01623634709 or admin@mansfieldprimaryacademy.org to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence (we expect this 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

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office by 9:15am.

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 and welfare 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 education enforcement officers to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Miss Yeomans and can be contacted via telephone on **01623 624709** or by email jyeomans@mansfieldprimaryacademy.org

The designated senior leader 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 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Yeomans and can be contacted via tel: 01623 624709 or via email: jyeomans@mansfieldprimaryacademy.org

The 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 8:45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the office on 01623624709

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.

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. This can be done by completing an exceptional absence form which can be located in the office in paper format or requested via the office team to be sent to the parent/carer in email format through Microsoft Forms.

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

The Academy responds to lateness in the following ways:

- The academy actively discourages late arrival by challenging pupils who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.
- Under the Education Regulations 1995, Mansfield Primary Academy is responsible for the upkeep of an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. The register will also indicate whether the child has an authorised or unauthorised absence.
- The Academy day begins at 8.45am and registers close in line with national guidance at 9.15am. Afternoon registers are taken at 1:15pm.

- When a pupil arrives late but during the period when the register is open, they will be marked present, late before registers close.
- Children arriving after 8:45am will be marked in the register as L – Late (before registers close). Those arriving after 9:15am will be marked U – Late (after registers closed), unless proof of the absence can be provided, i.e. medical appointment. If evidence is provided, the absence will be marked with the appropriate authorised code where necessary.
- Pupils who arrive late may be asked to stay in at breaks to catch up on the work they have missed; this will certainly be the case if they are persistently late.
- Lateness is monitored on a daily basis and letters are sent to parents/carers of children who need to improve their punctuality. Improvements in punctuality are recognised in a letter to parents/carers.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Text after 9:15am when registers close and call the pupil's parent/carer by 10am 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 will complete a home visit to check on the child's welfare with two members of staff including the attendance and welfare officer.
- 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 and text 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 attendance enforcement officer.

Reporting to parents/carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in half termly reports along with being available on request to give to the parent via the attendance and welfare officer.

The academy informs weekly class winners of the "Attendance unicorn" and shows the winning classes figures to promote good attendance via ClassDojo.

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 the following situations:

- Illness where the child has medical intervention.
- Close family bereavements.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term suspension.
- Permanent suspension until removed from roll or re-instated.

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 a week before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office and via email through requesting this with the office staff. 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

As an academy we follow the government guidelines of zero tolerance of holidays during term time. If you consider your request to be exceptional circumstances, then you can apply for the time of using a holiday request form from the office. This must be completed prior to any absence and given to the Principal who will review each application. Feedback will be provided to the applicant by either the Principal or the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

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 formalize support and / or enforce attendance. This includes fines or a penalty notice. The arrangements for these procedures are found

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-holidays-and-closures/holidays-during-term-time>

7. How we monitor attendance

If a telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by text and telephone by the Attendance and Welfare Officer, this will be followed up by a welfare check as we continue to make contact via home visit and a welfare slip will be posted through the door to inform parents of the visit and to contact the school regarding absence. This is completed by two members of staff including the Attendance and Welfare Officer.

We review overall attendance over blocks of six weeks (may be slightly more or less depending on length of half terms)

When attendance falls to 90% pupils are registered on the red list – on the first day of absence parents are contacted, Parents Support can be offered and contact with the Attendance and Welfare Officer can be made in order to prevent the attendance falling.

Early Help Unit referrals will be made to parents needing support with their child's attendance before legal enforcement is requested. This referral has to be given with parent's consent to support with the referral and if the parent does not consent, attendance enforcement referrals will be made to the Local Authority through Early Help.

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 school 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 school (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 the Early Help Unit and MASH referrals for children who have additional barriers at home that require more urgent attention.
- Monitoring of attendance below 90% due to illness.
- Lates notifications.
- Improved attendance on the previous term letters.
- Individual letters – personalised as appropriate.
- Meetings with parents and carers.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the trustor 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.