GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Mansfield Primary Academy

# Attendance Policy

MANSFIELD PRIMARY ACADEMY

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| **Approved by:** | Dave Jane | **Date:** | 02/10/26 |
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## Introduction

Mansfield Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all children. We believe it is extremely important for children 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 children 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 an exceptional absences form which can be obtained from the school office.

## 1. Aim

Ensuring all children have high attendance is a key priority of the Academy. Children are entitled to a full-time education and we know that children 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 children.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Build strong relationships with families to make sure children 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

- 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 stakeholders; 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
- Prominent display to celebrate good attendance

## 4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Children must arrive in school by 8.45am on each 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 1.00pm (1.15pm Y5/6) 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.

Note - where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult who 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 01623 624709 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
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the attendance champion, Amanda Laity, who can be contacted via phone on 01623 624709 or email on **admin@mansfieldprimaryacademy.org**

Children 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.

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

The attendance champion is Amanda Laity and can be contacted via phone on 01623 624709 or email on admin@mansfieldprimaryAcademy.org

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 together to tackle persistent absence

**The attendance officer is Amy West and can be contacted via telephone on 01623 624709 or by email on admin@mansfieldprimaryAcademy.org**

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/carers to the attendance lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

## 5. Recording attendance

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all children 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 (Child 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 child's parent/carer must notify the Academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by emailing / calling the Academy office staff.

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 child'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.

## Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the child'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 child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child'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 are in the office in paper format.

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

## Lateness and punctuality

A child who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code L (between 8.45-9.15am)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code U (after 9.15am)

The Academy responds to lateness in the following ways:

- The Academy actively discourages late arrival by challenging children 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 children 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 1.00pm (1.15pm Y5/6)
- When a child 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.

- Children 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

### Reporting to parents/ carers

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

- Text after 9.15am when registers close and call the child's parent/carer by 10am of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the Academy cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, the Academy will attempt to complete a home visit to check on the child's welfare with two members of staff including an attendance 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 the attendance enforcement officer.

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 officer.

The Academy informs weekly class winners and shows the winning classes figures to promote good attendance via ClassDojo. A star is added to the attendance display so children can see how many stars they have earned.

## 6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### Approval for term-time absence

The principal can only grant a leave of absence to a child 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 principal's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a child 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 before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. Evidence may be required to support any request for leave of absence.

### 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 off 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, Attendance Champion, or the Attendance Officer.

### 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 children who are absent or returning to school

### Child absent due to complex barriers to attendance

We will invite families in for a meeting to discuss barriers to attendance and look at ways we can support. Where appropriate we will offer the support of The Attend Framework or an EHAF referral.

### Child absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a child 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 child's needs, the Academy must inform the local authority.

### Child returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

We will look at a graduated return to full-time education. Support from a trusted adult. We will use pre and post learning tasks to support with gaps in 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 child level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Child-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 children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children 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 children, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the children it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with children and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and child 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 child's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific children, where appropriate

### Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child 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 children 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 referrals to outside agencies, ELSA support and The Attend Framework.

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

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