



GREENWOOD DALE FOUNDATION TRUST

Mablethorpe Primary Academy

Attendance Policy for Primary Academies

REVIEW PROCESS	
REVIEWED	10/07/2024
NEXT REVIEW	09/07/2025

Introduction

The Academy is committed to providing a full and effective education for all of its pupils. The Academy strives to ensure that all pupils benefit from regular attendance and the education it provides. To this end, the Academy will do all it can to ensure that pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may impede full attendance are acted upon as quickly as possible.

Statutory Education

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupils should be deprived of their educational opportunities by non-attendance.
- In the first instance it is the responsibility of parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law
<http://www.education.gov.uk/popularquestions/a005530/are-parents-responsible-for-their-child's-school-attendance?>
- A small minority of pupils and their parents may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities and the Academy will aim to assist, with the help of external agencies if necessary.
- Most pupils want to attend in order to learn, to socialise with their peer groups and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.
- All pupils are expected to attend the Academy everyday unless they are unable to do so because of illness.
- Since September 2013 Academy attendance regulations have changed under **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** which amends the existing 2006 regulations. As a result of the new government legislation Principals will no longer be able to allow any absence for the purpose of a holiday during term time. Any holiday in term time will be treated as unauthorised.
- The regulations do allow Principals to authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances”. Please find below a list of examples of allowable absences and those which will now be classed as unauthorised absences.

Allowed Absence

- Sickness/illness (evidence seen of appointment/ medication from GP/Hospital)
- Emergency and planned medical appointments (parents are requested to make routine appointments outside school hours).
- Hospital scheduled appointments /treatment.
- Day/s for specific religious observance.
- The Academy is closed due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Temporary exclusion.

Allowed absence in exceptional circumstances (authorised at the discretion of the Principal/Head of School)

- Immediate family bereavement or close friend bereavement.
- Other compassionate grounds.
- Immediate family wedding/civil partnership taking part on a school day.
- Family crisis.
- Examinations off site.
- Educational Opportunity – Sport and Performance.
- Visit to a new school.
- Family re-location visit.
- It is at the Principal's discretion to determine the number of days a child can be away from the Academy if leave of absence is granted.

Absences not allowed under any circumstances (unauthorised)

- Family holiday no matter what length.
- Sickness/illness (no evidence of appt/ medication of five days or more)
- Family trips/attending concerts.
- Leaving early to travel to an event.
- Minding the house/looking after siblings.
- No evidence of an appointment with doctor/dentist.
- The Academy feels parental note is invalid.
- No explanation of absence is forthcoming.
- Birthdays.
- Shopping trips.
- Dropping siblings off.

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completing the 'Request for Absence' form which can be obtained via the Attendance tab on the Mablethorpe Primary website, or from the main office. The Principal/ Head of School will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time.

Please be aware that the local authority has been given jurisdiction to impose fines for unauthorised absence and the Academy may be asked to report unauthorised absence.

For absence relating to illness of five days or more, the Academy may request a doctor's note to confirm the absence. We hope that parents will understand that we are bound by the changes in government legislation and make every effort to comply with the attendance regulations.

The Academy has an aspirational attendance rate of 97%.

Expectations Relating to Attendance and Punctuality

We expect the following from all of our pupils:

- They will attend the Academy everyday unless illness prevents this.
- They will arrive on time (registration at 0900hrs, gates open at 0845hrs) and appropriately prepared for the day.
- They will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending.
- They will arrive at the Academy wearing the correct uniform.

We expect the following from parents:

- To ensure their children attend the Academy every day.
- To ensure that they contact the Academy at the start of the day whenever their child is unable to attend because of illness – (ensures the safety of the child).
Phone: 01507472472
Email: admin@mablethorpeprimaryacademy.org
- To ensure medical evidence is produced to support and appointments or absences.
- To ensure their children arrive at the Academy well prepared for the day and in the correct uniform.
- To contact the Academy whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from the Academy.
- To ensure their child is collected promptly from the Academy and that the Academy is notified in writing if their child is permitted to walk home alone.
The safeguarding procedures will be instigated if there is no contact with the parent and the child is still at the Academy one hour after the end of the day.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from the Academy

- A regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend the Academy without providing good reason.
- Prompt action on any problem notified to the Academy.
- Rewards to encourage good attendance.

Encouraging Attendance

The following strategies are implemented to encourage and monitor attendance:

- Providing stimulating learning opportunities and an ethos in which all members of the Academy community are valued. This is the responsibility of every teacher working at the Academy.
- Providing security of learning and a safe environment in which to learn.
- Parents are informed at induction of the importance of regular attendance and are advised of the consequences of non-attendance.

- Mablethorpe Primary Academy understands that there are circumstances beyond the control of pupils and parents that can have an impact on attendance. Positive attendance is where the school recognises good attendance despite those circumstances.
- Certificates will be awarded for positive attendance.
- Attendance is reported to parents every term, and by certificates three times a year.
- Regular monitoring of attendance takes place.
- The Academy works in partnership with the Educational Welfare Officer and Educational Entitlement Service.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend, the Academy responds by contacting home on the first day of absence if the absence has not already been reported. This measure is undertaken to ensure a child's safety. If there is no response a home visit will be conducted by the Education Welfare Officer until contact is made with the parent/carer and a reason for the absence given.

- The Academy is particularly concerned about any pupil's attendance which fails to consistently meet 90%. This situation is deemed by the government to be persistent absenteeism.
- Pupils with poor punctuality will also be monitored by the Attendance Officer or the Attendance Lead/Principal.
- If attendance or punctuality falls below 97% during the half term the parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.
- The Attendance Officer is responsible for: first day phone calls or texts, second day phone calls or text, letters and home visits. They will also follow the Local Authority's safeguarding procedures regarding a missing pupil.
- In continued non-attendance, the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer responsible for referring to Educational Entitlement. This may, in appropriate cases, result in legal action.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be referred for legal action, if one has not been made at an earlier stage.
- Throughout, the Attendance Officer will meet with the EWO and Principal/Head of School in order to keep everyone informed.
- Rewards and consequences are in place and explanatory charts are displayed around the Academy. This information is also provided to parents.
- Academy attendance meetings take place each week. Parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern, or pupils who have failed to improve their attendance following previous interventions, are invited to meet with the Education Welfare Officer.

Re-integration

- Returning to the Academy after long-term absence requires special planning; e.g.

pastoral support.

- The appropriate staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SENCO may be required.

Academy Organisation

In order for any policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils, the importance of the education being provided. This means ensuring that staff arrive to lessons on time and are well prepared. In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff groups such as the following:

Principal/Head of School:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To report to the Academy Advisory Council, pupils and parents.
- To ensure that challenging but achievable targets are set.
- To ensure the operation of the attendance system and the collation of attendance data is in place.
- To monitor the work of the Attendance Officer.

Liaising with Various Agencies When Appropriate

Good relations and working practices are essential. Agencies have difficult roles in that they endeavor to support both the Academy in meeting its legal obligations as well as the family in ensuring that the pupil's educational opportunities are maximised to the full. Some parents need the support of these agencies so that they can fulfill their legal obligations to their children. The Academy will work with these agencies when appropriate.

Educational Welfare

The Education Welfare Officers work closely with teachers, pupils and their families. Whilst the priority will relate to attendance matters, other activities may include child protection, holidays in term time, child employment and children in entertainment and any other problems that prevent a young person benefiting fully from the educational opportunities available to them.

The Academy Education Welfare Officers support the Academy and its pupils and their parents in the following ways:

- Accepting referrals.
- Home visiting to make an assessment of the problems.

- Liaison on mediation between the Academy and home.
- Working with the family, the Academy and the young person to resolve the attendance problems.
- Where necessary, instigating legal proceedings on behalf of the Local Authority in the Magistrates' Court or the Family Court.
- Offering professional advice, guidance and support about pupil welfare issues;
- Work on specific attendance projects.
- Advice on the collection and analysis of attendance data.

Other agencies will be used where appropriate in individual cases:

- Educational Psychologist.
- Special Educational Needs Disability Service.
- Social Service.
- CAMHS.

Academy SENDCO: The SEN Coordinator (SENDCO) plays a key role in determining the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision in the Academy in order to raise the achievement of children with SEN. The SENDCO takes day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the SEN policy and coordination of the provision made for individual children with SEN, working closely with staff, parents and carers, and other agencies. The SENDCO also provides related professional guidance to colleagues with the aim of securing high quality teaching for children with SEN.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190545/D_CSF-00639-2008.pdf

Punctuality

The Supreme Court in the Isle of Wight case ruled that a minute late is a criminal offence. When a pupil arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This reduces their chances of academic success. Poor punctuality can also cause social disruption – pupils may feel uncomfortable and embarrassed arriving to the classroom when everyone else is already settled. In fact, when one pupil arrives late it disrupts the teacher and the rest of the class, compromising everyone's learning.

Late Procedure

- Liaising with families to discuss the reasons.
- Discussing with the Principal to put actions into place.
- Pupils who are persistently late (after close of register) will be referred to their Education Welfare Officer or another outside agency for further action.

Changes to the law in relation to attendance as of September 2024

In August 2024, the Government's White Paper on Working Together to Improve Attendance comes into effect. An attendance rate of 96% is required, unless absence is due to medical reason or otherwise. 95% attendance means that your child will have missed 10 school days over the year, which is a significant amount. In the Supreme Court case of R v Platt, regular attendance is defined as attending on time, and on the days that school have designated, and that even a minute late is an offence. This applies to all children enrolled at school and there is no exception for Nursery and Reception students.

What's changed: 10 sessions (a session is half a school day) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

First time Fixed Penalty Notice for term time leave, or irregular attendance is £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second time offence for term time leave or irregular attendance is £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Third offence, and any further offence within 3 years, of term time leave or irregular attendance, a Fixed Penalty will not be issued. The case will be submitted straight to Magistrate's court and fines can be £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in court can show on a parent's DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'

While we understand that children become ill, minor illnesses will not be authorised. These are headaches, tiredness and minor colds. Public Health England guidelines will be followed, which can be found at:

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_infection_control_in%20schools_poster.pdf

Absences over four days will need to be supported by medical evidence. This can be a copy of the prescription, a doctor's note or NHS text. A call with the reason for the absence is required from the parent/carer each morning.

Unauthorised absences will be forwarded to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty, as at Section 7 below.

Family holidays will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. What are not exceptional circumstances are: seasonal work, family weddings abroad or being unable to take holidays during term time due to work. It is the Principal's decision as to what constitutes an exceptional circumstance. Multiple holidays in a school year will be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of prosecution before a Magistrates Court.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have removed the reference to holidays during term time and now provides that a leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made in advance to the school and the school consider that the leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

Should you fail to apply in advance for absence due to family holiday or other circumstance then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. If it has been decided

that any holiday applied for does not constitute 'exceptional circumstance' then your child's absence will also be recorded as unauthorised and a request will be submitted to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure their child receives suitable efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or education otherwise. Section 444 (1)(a) of the same Act states that where a parent of a child who knowingly and without reasonable justification fails to ensure regular attendance of a registered pupil at that school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section. The Local Authority may, where necessary, institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under this section of the Education Act 1996 against those parents concerned. Alternatively, Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Education Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of up to £120.00 per parent, per child. In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of up to £120.00 per parent, per child. This letter is a formal Fixed Penalty Warning should you cause your child to be absent from Mablethorpe Primary Academy without authorisation.