



Attendance

Policy into practice

1. Aims

This document aims to set out the practice and procedures followed by Gosberton Academy in relation to attendance.

Gosberton Academy recognises the importance of good attendance at school in enabling their learners to achieve their potential in life.

2. Definitions

The academy defines "**absence**" as either:

- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed.
- Not attending the academy for any reason.

The academy defines an "**authorised absence**" as:

- An absence for sickness for which the academy has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the academy has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the academy has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

The academy defines an "**unauthorised absence**" as:

- Parents keeping children away from the academy unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at the academy after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving the academy for no reason during the day.

The academy defines "**persistent absenteeism (PA)**" as:

Any learner who misses more than 10% (19 school days) schooling within and across the academic year for whatever reason (either authorised or unauthorised).

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any learner's educational prospects and we need parent/carer's full support and co-operation to tackle this.

The academy defines "**in danger of becoming persistently absent**" as:

Any learner whose attendance is 90% to 93% within and across the academic year for whatever reason (either authorised or unauthorised).

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any learner's educational prospects and we need parent/carer's full support and co-operation to tackle this.

3. Promoting Good Attendance

- Regular parental reminders regarding the importance of exceptional attendance.
- Termly updates to parents to share child's attendance.
- Class Dojo points awarded for arriving at school and arriving on time.
- Termly 100% certificates
- Termly 'In-It-To-Win-It' where all learners with 97%+ attendance are entered into a draw to win a prize.
- Weekly Class Attendance certificates – bronze, silver and gold.
- A culture that gets children wanting to come to school.
- Phone calls home from office staff to ensure all absences are explained.
- Phone calls to families from Headteacher to offer support around attendance.
- School Attendance Panel meetings for learners in need of improving their attendance.

Weekly analysis of attendance will take place and involve the Headteacher, Attendance Champion and the Administrator. This analysis will involve looking at trends and figures of individuals, classes, year groups and key groups of learners such as Pupil Premium, Free School Meals-entitled learners and Special Educational Needs learners.

4. Attendance Register

AM registration is taken at 8:45am. The register then closes at 9:15am.

PM registration is taken at 1pm. The register then closes at 1:10pm.

Staff completing the attendance register in the first instance will mark whether learners are:

Present / (am) \ (pm)

Absent N

Once a register has been completed, staff will ensure that the register is saved.

Administration staff will then go through the register and use the appropriate code to denote the reasons for absence.

B = Off-site educational activity
C = Authorised absence
D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
G = Unauthorised holiday
H = Authorised holiday
I = Illness
J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
L = Late arrival before the register has closed
M = Medical or dental appointments
N = Reason not yet provided
O = Unauthorised absence
P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
R = Religious observance
S = Study leave
T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
U = Arrived after registration closed
V = Educational visit or trip
W = Work experience
X = Not required to be in school
Y = Exceptional circumstances
Z – Pupil not on admission register
- Planned whole or partial closure.

Where there is no known reason, nominated person(s) will take reasonable steps to ascertain the whereabouts of pupils. This will include: phoning all available contacts, sending a text/ WEDUC message and/or sending an email until contact has been made. The headteacher will be responsible for identifying the nominated person(s).

If no contact can be made, once these steps have been followed, the child will continue to be recorded as 'N'. In addition, the academy may decide, at their discretion, to make an unannounced home visit to the learner's listed address. If there is no answer, a calling card will be left asking parents/ carers to contact the academy as soon as possible.

Where no reason is provided for an absence, the academy will send a letter to the home address to request a reason for the absence.

5. Absences

Parents and carers are responsible for informing the academy about any absences.

Illness/Injuries

Where learners are ill and are unable to attend, parents and carers are responsible for making contact with the academy on day 1 of any absence. This can be done by phone call (01775 840414) or through Weduc message.

Parents must specify the reason they are absent being 'ill' is not a sufficient reason and parents may be asked to clarify this further.

Having an injury is not necessarily a reason to be absent from the academy. Parents should contact the academy as soon as possible to clarify whether their child is able to continue to attend school. For the majority of injuries, learners will still be able to attend the academy with reasonable adjustments being made for them.

Religious Observances

The academy recognises that some religious observances take place during term time and learners may need to be absent from the academy to attend services and festivals.

Where a parent/ carer intends to remove their child for the observance, they must make a request to the academy at least 28 days prior to the observance.

The academy may seek clarification of these dates from religious leaders and organisations where necessary.

Holidays During Term Time

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

The academy is not able to authorise holidays during term time unless there are specific exceptional circumstances. This is at the discretion of the headteacher.

If parents/ carers feel that their circumstances are exceptional, then they must make a request in writing for consideration by the headteacher who will decide whether or not the holiday will be authorised and for how long the learner is permitted to be absent.

If parents/ carers chose to take their children out of the academy without authorisation from the headteacher, this absence will be coded as unauthorised. The academy will then make an application to the local authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to be issued. The current fixed penalty notice rate is £60 per child per parent.

Holiday = Parent 1 + Parent 2 + Child 1 + Child 2

£60 per child = £120 x 2 (number of parents)

= £240 fine for holiday (if paid within 21 days)

Failure to pay a FPN may result in further legal action being taken by the local authority in the form of the Single Justice Process in the Magistrates Court.

Medical Appointments

Where possible the academy would encourage parents/carers to arrange medical/dental appointments outside of the academy day.

Where this is not possible, parent/carers must inform the academy in advance of the appointment. It is imperative that learners are not absent for more time than is necessary to attend the appointment.

Evidence of the appointment will be requested by the academy.

6. Responding to Poor Attendance

Letter of Concern

At the end of each term, letters of concern are sent to all parents/carers where their child's attendance has fallen below 90%.

At the end of each term, an attendance breakdown is sent to all parents/carers.

More frequent letters may be sent to some parents/carers where attendance has not shown signs of improvement.

School Attendance Panel

When the academy has concerns about the attendance level of a learner, they will invite the parent(s)/ carers in to discuss the issues surrounding the poor attendance. This is known as a school attendance panel meeting.

The meeting will be held by the Academy and involve the Headteacher/Attendance Champion and an educational welfare officer may be in attendance, depending on the level of attendance.

During this meeting an action plan will be created and this will be shared with parents/carers. A target for the learner's attendance and a review date will be set. Additional support through the Early Help process will also be discussed at the meeting where appropriate.

Pupil Not Attending Regularly (PNAR)

Where a learner has missed 10 consecutive days of learning, without prior consent, the academy will inform the Local Authority who will issue a warning letter to the parents/ carers.

Further Action

Where there is little/ no improvement in a learner's attendance despite supportive measures being offered, the academy will consider referring the matter to the local authority who have the power to issue further sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecutions in the court arena.

Responding to learners who arrive late

Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. The academy gates are open at 8:35am and we expect all learners to be in class at the start of the school day at 8:45am, registers are marked at this time. If a learner arrives at the academy after 8:50am and before 9:15am, they will be recorded as late (L).

Attendance after the registers close at 9:15am will receive an unauthorised late mark (U) to show that they are on site, but this will count as an absent mark. Learners who are absent before they come into the academy due to medical appointment, must provide evidence of the appointment either before the appointment or as soon as they return after the appointment.

A letter will be sent informing parents/carers of learners who are regularly late that this is not acceptable and in extreme cases, where no improvement has been made, this may mean that parents/carers could be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher.

If there is no improvement in a learner's attendance and lateness, the academy may refer the matter to the local authority who have the power to issue sanctions for poor attendance such as penalty notices or prosecutions.

7. Reduced/ Part-time Timetables

Reduced timetables are a provision the academy can make when supporting learners with individual needs. They are most commonly used where learners are returning from an extended absence due to illness or injury or to support where learners are struggling with social, emotional and/or mental health issues.

A reduced timetable can only be implemented with the consent of the parent and must be reviewed every six weeks with them.

They are designed to provide short-term support to learners who are in challenging circumstances.

A reduced timetable has a significant impact on learner attendance data and is only considered as a last resort.

Whilst learners are on a reduced timetable, the responsibility for safeguarding them and education remains with the academy.

8. Leavers

There are many reasons why children leave an academy over the course of year. This can include:

- Moving house and the academy is too far from the new address
- Moving country
- Moving school through parental choice
- Moving school due to the needs of a learner
- Service personnel posting

In order to complete all the necessary checks, the academy will ask parents/ carers to complete a leavers form. This form asks for information which enables a school to remove a child from the admission register. Without all the information, the academy has to log a child as missing in education.

9. Children Missing Education (CME)

Please refer to the CME policy for further guidance.

10. Elective Home Education (EHE)

It is a parent's right to home educate their child if that is what they wish. The local authority must make arrangements to find out so far as possible whether home educated children are receiving suitable full-time education.

If parents/ carers are considering home educating their child/children they must first discuss this with the academy.

A meeting will be held to discuss the parents/ carers options.

Confirmation will then need to be given in writing by parents/ carers of the intention to home educate.

The Local Authority will then make arrangements to visit parents to check on the quality of the education.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-attendance/home-education>

11. Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Very rarely, some learners can develop severe anxiety about coming to school and will avoid coming. Their attendance can start to decline significantly and suddenly.

In order to support learners with these needs, the academy is able to access support from a variety of professionals who are experts in this fields.

If parents/ carers are concerned that their child may be experiencing this, they should contact the academy at their earliest possible opportunity. The earlier a child is supported the better the outcomes are for them.