GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Sunnyside Primary Academy

Attendance policy

Reviewed by: **Approved by:**	Susan Marsh Clare Ley	**Date:** 5th September 2023
Last reviewed on:	September 2023	
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Introduction

Sunnyside 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 Sunnyside 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 circumstances.

How to notify the Academy of an absence

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or exceptional circumstances, please contact the academy on each day of absence by calling 01604 842958 and leaving a message on the absence line or by emailing the school office on admin@sunnysideprimaryacademy.org before 9am.

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 a leave of Absence form. You can collect a paper copy from the office or complete an online form which can be found on our school website

https://www.sunnysideprimaryacademy.org/form/?pid=50&form=18

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 analyse patterns of absence.
- Work with local partners to support high attendance and reduce 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

Attendance is celebrated regularly within the Academy with the classes with the best attendance, for each key stage, being rewarded in our weekly celebration assembly.

The Family Support Worker will always be available to provide confidential and appropriate support for any family struggling with attendance.

Reintegration

The return to school for a student after long-term absence requires special planning. The Family Support Worker and Class Teacher will work to support reintegrating a child into school.

Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SEND Co-ordinator may be required.

Parents will be informed of this intention if it is necessary.

4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.20 am

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, expect 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 01604 842958 / admin@sunnysideprimaryacademy.org to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and 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.
- Attend school every day on time.
- 'Be Ready'.
- Tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly and/or be punctual.

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office by 9:10am.

Admin/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 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 our school attendance support officer to tackle persistent absence.

The attendance officer is Mrs Marsh and can be contacted via 01604 842958.

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 Mrs Ley who can be contacted via 01604 842958.

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 9am or as soon as practically possible by emailing / calling the academy admin/office staff on admin@sunnysideprimaryacademy.org / 01604 842958

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. Parents/Carers should complete a leave of Absence form in advance, this can be completed electronically via the school website https://www.sunnysideprimaryacademy.org/form/?pid=50&form=18

There are also paper copies available in the school 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 will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Lates are monitored every half term and a letter will be sent to parents/carers if punctuality becomes and concern, if there is no improvement parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss and support and you may be asked to complete a Parent Contract.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- 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 complete a home visit and/or contact Police and other agencies.
- 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 via half-termly letters if attendance is a concern. Attendance figures are sent out with School Reports.

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:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence/abuse.
- Weddings of parents or siblings.
- Serious illness of a close relative.
- Participation in out of school events at a competition level.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering 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 two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible https://www.sunnysideprimaryacademy.org/form/?pid=50&form=18.

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.

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 formalise support and / or enforce attendance. This includes fines or a penalty notice. The arrangements for these procedures are found online: https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/Pages/attendance-and-behaviour-support-for-parents.aspx

7. 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 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 academy 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 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 offering Early Help Assessments which include professionals from all areas, Parent contracts and referrals to Northampton Council's school attendance support officer.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the trust or 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.