



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Skegby Junior Academy

Attendance Policy and Protocol

Approved by: C Bennett

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September 2024

Next review due by:
September 2026

Introduction

Skegby Junior 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 Skegby Junior 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 460329, emailing admin@skegbyjunioracademy.org or by using Dojo's messaging service.
- 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. 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 pupils
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils 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

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education at Skegby Junior Academy that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents/carers may need support at some stage to meet their attendance obligations and responsibilities. The academy will work in partnership with parents to understand and overcome the barriers to attendance.
- Some situations are beyond the control of the pupil and their parents/carers and may need the support of external agencies to resolve them.
- All children have a right to achieve their full potential. Good attendance enables children to work towards making good, consistent progress in their learning. In order for this to happen, children must attend regularly.
- Any child returning to the academy after a period of absence will be supported by the adults in their class as they settled back into routine.

Academy Responsibilities

- Communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the Academy
- Maintain thorough attendance data
- Carry out clear registration practices
- Follow up absences and lateness if parents /carers have not communicated with the Academy - first-day absence phone call initially
- Inform parents /carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- Maintain systematic tracking of daily attendance/lateness
- Report to Targeted Support where attendance requires involvement with a child
- Communicate with all shareholders; Parents, Greenwood Academies Trust, Local Authority, and Government about attendance
- Consistently administer agreed attendance procedure
- To enforce Government guidelines regarding authorisation of holidays within term time and the implementation of fines
- Implement a series of rewards for good attendance

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 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

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 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/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the academy on 01623 460329, email admin@skegbyjunioracademy.org or use Dojo's messaging service to report their child's absence before 8.45am 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

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs Dove (Attendance Officer), who can be contacted via telephone (01623 460329) or by emailing admin@skegbyjunioracademy.org

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

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

The attendance champion is Mrs Bennett and can be contacted via telephone (01623 460328) or by emailing admin@skegbyjunioracademy.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 with outside agencies to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Mrs Dove and can be contacted via telephone (01623 460329) or by emailing admin@skegbyjunioracademy.org

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office by 8.55am and 1.10pm.

Admin 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

5. Recording attendance

We will keep an electronic 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.

We will use the national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil 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 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 telephone on 01623 460329 or email admin@skegbyjunioracademy.org.

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 5 days, 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.

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 must make their application in writing, using the yellow leave of absence form, available from the main reception. All applications will be considered by the Principal and parents/carers will be notified, in writing, of the decision.

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 actively discourages late arrivals by challenging pupils who are persistently late or arrive late without a reasonable explanation.
- The Academy day begins at 8.45am and registers close in line with national guidance at 9.15am. Afternoon registers are taken at 1pm.
- When a pupil arrives late but during the period when the register is open, they will be marked present, late before registers close.
- 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.
- The importance of punctuality is highlighted weekly in assembly and the most punctual class wins the weekly trophy.

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 contact Social Care or the Police.
- 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. This is reported to parents at parents' evenings and on annual reports to parents/carers. The attendance officer will report any attendance concerns to parents, in writing, as soon as they arise. If a child is at risk of becoming a concern, this will also be communicated with parents/carers.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The principal can only grant a leave of absence to a pupil 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 pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil 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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible from the main academy reception. 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
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Principal may grant term-time authorised absence are weddings, funerals, sporting events and trials.
- Family holidays should not be taken in term time as they damage progress and continuity of learning. We will not authorise any holidays unless in very exceptional circumstances.

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.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-discipline-and-exclusions/attendance-absence-truancy>

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The Principal/Attendance Champion will work with families to identify complex barriers to attendance and devise an appropriate support plan to reintegrate children back into full time education. Any additional support needed will be identified.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The Principal/Attendance Champion and the SENDCO will work with families to make appropriate adaptations and devise a support plan to reintegrate children back into full time education. Any additional support needed will be identified.

Where a pupil 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 pupil's needs, the academy must inform the local authority.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The Principal/Attendance Champion will work with families to devise an appropriate support plan to reintegrate children back into full time education. Any additional support needed will be identified.

8. How we monitor attendance

The following steps are how attendance is monitored at Skegby Junior Academy:

- A record of absence is kept on the computer system. This details the child's class, year group, late minutes, contact with parents/carers and year to date, termly and weekly attendance percentage figures.
- On the first day of absence, if there has been no correspondence from parents by 9am, the office staff will telephone the parents/carers to find out the reason for the absence.
- The Principal reviews the levels of authorised absence and unauthorised absences weekly.
- If a parent wishes to take their child out of school for a holiday, then it needs to be in 'exceptional circumstances' and they need to write to the Principal explaining those circumstances. They may be invited to come and talk about this so that they get a chance to state their reasons. We cannot authorise holidays that are not 'exceptional

circumstances'. If a request for an authorised holiday is declined and the parent chooses to still take the child out of school, an unauthorised mark will be given in the register and a fine may be implemented. If the holiday results in 5 days unauthorised absence in a 10 week rolling period, the parent's/carer's details will be passed to the local authority for them to issue a fixed penalty notice.

- Children who have attendance below 90% are classed as persistently absent and are unlikely to have any absence authorised without provision of appropriate medical evidence to support why that child is absent.
- Children who are identified as needing extra support with their attendance will be identified and appropriate interventions will be agreed by SLT and the attendance officer. Support can be offered to the child and the parent/carer.
- An attendance EHAF maybe completed to provide extra external support.

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.

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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to the Principal/Attendance Champion, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil 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 pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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 Early Help and Social Care
- Parents/carers of pupils who have an attendance of less than 90% will be sent a letter with details of their child's absences and notification of a monitoring period of six weeks. During the monitoring period, parents or carers will trigger a fixed penalty notice if they accrue 5 days of unauthorised attendance. If, at the end of the monitoring period, attendance has not improved, parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting and a second period of monitoring will take place.
- Any child with attendance under 90% and not improving will be referred to the Enforcement Team

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.