



CORBY PRIMARY ACADEMY

# Attendance Policy

**Approved by:** Andrew Evans **Date:** September 2022

**Last reviewed on:** September 2022

**Next review due by:** September 2024

## Introduction

Corby 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 Corby 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/ 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 academy on each day of absence:

**Call the academy on 01536 430510**

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:

**Email the academy, via [admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org](mailto:admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org)**

## 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. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 and will be kept open until 9:00. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45pm for Reception pupils, 1:00pm for KS1 pupils and 1:30pm for KS2 pupils.

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.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the academy on 01536 430510 / [admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org](mailto:admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org) to report their child's absence before 8:30am 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

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office by 8:50am.

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 lead 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Nikki Sinclair and can be contacted via 01536 430510 / [admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org](mailto:admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org)

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 Andrew Evans and can be contacted via 01536 430510 / [admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org](mailto:admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org)

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

## 4. 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 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by emailing / calling the academy office staff

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. We kindly ask parents to provide proof of appointment letters where possible.

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 the online Pupil Leave of Absence form, which can be found on our academy website, within the 'Parents' section.

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

## 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 carry out a home visit, or contact the police to carry out a welfare check in order to confirm the wellbeing and safety of a pupil.
- › 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. Parents will receive a termly written attendance in December and March and a yearly attendance report along with their child's end of year report in July. Parents will also receive a verbal attendance update during the parents evening meetings in October and February.

## 5. 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 events which are unavoidable, that subsequently prevent a pupil from attending school. There is not an exhaustive list of exceptional circumstances, and each request will be based on the individual situation.

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 one week before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via our academy website. 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

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

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 [Penalty notices for non-school attendance - Schools and education \(northamptonshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/penalty-notice-for-non-school-attendance)

## 6. How we monitor attendance

Individual pupil's attendance will be regularly monitored by the academy and the Local Authority and concerns promptly discussed with parents and carers. A first letter will be sent to parents when the level of attendance goes below the school expectation of 95% and offering pastoral support. If attendance continues to be of concern, then a second letter will be sent setting a target for attendance over a period of 5 weeks and offering pastoral support. During this period of 5 weeks, absence will be monitored and if the target remains unmet, parents will be invited into school for a meeting with the Principal where an attendance contract will be formulated.

Letters will be sent out at the beginning of each half term (6 times a year) advising on 5 or more late arrivals in the previous term. Please note that late arrivals will reflect in a child's attendance (please see the section on punctuality).

School staff will work with pupils, parents and other agencies to resolve school related issues which are impacting on a pupil's attendance.

If, after school-based initiatives, the level of attendance continues to be unsatisfactory the school will request the involvement of the local authority's Educational and Inclusion Partnership Team.

## 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 the Education & Inclusion Partnership Team and Strengthening Families Partnership Team.

The academy will also send letters to parents / carers and arrange formal meetings to discuss a pupil's attendance in order to target and address unauthorised absences.

## 7. 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.