CORBY PRIMARY ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

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One Page Parent Summary

Why attendance matters

Regular attendance helps children learn, feel confident and succeed at school. Being in school every day supports progress, friendships and wellbeing.

Our expectations

- School starts at **8:40am** (registers close at **9:00am**)
- Children should attend **every day**, unless they are unwell or there is an exceptional reason
- Parents* (and those with parental responsibility) have a **legal duty** to ensure regular attendance

Reporting absence

If your child is absent, please inform us **each day by 9:00am**:

- 📞 **01536 430510**
- 📧 **admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org**

Term-time absence

- Medical appointments should be shared in advance where possible
- Holidays in term time are **not authorised**, except in very exceptional circumstances

Support for families

We understand that some children experience challenges, including **mental health needs, medical conditions or SEND**.

- We work with families to provide appropriate support
- Reasonable adjustments may be made where needed
- A **part-time timetable** will only be used in **exceptional circumstances**, as a **short-term and last resort measure**, with a clear plan to return to fulltime schooling.

When attendance is a concern

- We will contact parents early if attendance drops
- Support will be offered to help improve attendance
- If attendance does not improve, the Local Authority may become involved

When attendance is above 96%

- We will contact parents to celebrate this achievement

Working together

If you are worried about your child's attendance, **please speak to us as early as possible**.

Attendance Officer: Mrs Emma Ellingworth **Attendance Lead:** Mr Aaron Campion
📞 01536 430510 | 📧 admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org

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 pupils 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 by 9am

Call the academy on 📞 01536 430510 on each day of absence and leaving a message on our attendance line or email: 📧 admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org

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:

📞 01536 430510 or email: 📧 admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org

1. Aim

Ensuring all pupils have high attendance is everyone's responsibility and the Academy's role is to create a culture where pupils feel safe, supported and able to attend every day. 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 potential indicator of wider issues in a child's life, not just a problem in isolation.

The aim of this document is to set out how we promote and maintain a culture where good attendance is the expectation for all pupils. It includes how we:

- promote good attendance and punctuality,
- identify patterns of absence early, using data to spot concerns before they escalate
- work collaboratively with families, offering support rather than blame
- address underlying causes, recognising that absence often signals wider needs
- ensure safeguarding is central, treating attendance as a key indicator of a child's wellbeing
- build strong multi-agency partnerships, especially with the local authority and external services
- provide timely, targeted interventions that are proportionate to the level of concern.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of GAT's Attendance Policy. The Trust policy details the relevant legislation and guidance documents. This policy follows the DfE's guidance in this area – Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024).

Our work on attendance is linked closely to our approaches to safeguarding and behaviour, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

3. How we promote a culture of high expectations in attendance and punctuality

At Corby Primary Academy, we promote a strong culture of high expectations around attendance and punctuality, recognising that regular and timely attendance is essential to pupils' academic progress, wellbeing and long-term life chances. We are clear that excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community and is a key priority for all staff, pupils and families.

We actively communicate the importance of good attendance and punctuality through clear policies, regular communication with families and consistent messages across the Academy. Expectations are shared with parents* from the point of admission and reinforced through newsletters, meetings, the Academy website and daily interactions. Attendance targets and statutory responsibilities are made explicit so that families understand what is expected and why it matters. For example, each class displays their weekly attendance on their classroom door; school versus national figures are displayed outside of the front office; class attendance is celebrated in Dojo assemblies every two weeks and shared on Class Dojo with parents.

At the heart of our approach is a strong partnership with families. We work proactively with parents* to build positive relationships based on trust, openness and shared responsibility. Where attendance concerns arise, we meet with families promptly to discuss issues, identify barriers and agree clear, supportive actions. These meetings focus on problem solving and early intervention, ensuring concerns are addressed before patterns of poor attendance become embedded.

We closely monitor attendance and punctuality data to identify trends, patterns and individual needs. This allows us to respond swiftly and appropriately, offering graduated support where required. Support may include pastoral intervention, referrals to internal support services or engagement with external agencies, such as the Local Authority, Mental Health Support Services or health and family support services, to ensure families receive the help they need.

Alongside support, we maintain high expectations through consistency and accountability. We follow clear procedures for addressing persistent absence and lateness, ensuring that statutory guidance is applied fairly and proportionately. Our approach balances care and challenge, reinforcing the message that regular attendance and punctuality are non-negotiable expectations for all pupils.

We also promote positive attendance through recognition and celebration. Attendance is celebrated every two weeks during Dojo assemblies, with each class in each year group competing for a trophy to take back to their class. In addition to this, one child with high attendance is drawn from a hat each half term and wins a £10 voucher to spend. This is not necessarily children with 100% attendance, including those who have had medical appointments of significant This helps pupils to develop pride in their attendance and understand the value of being present, on time and ready to learn every day.

Through clear expectations, strong relationships, early identification of barriers, and consistent, supportive action, Corby Primary Academy creates the conditions for high attendance. We promote a shared understanding that attending every day is essential to pupils' learning, wellbeing, and long-term outcomes, and we work in partnership with families and agencies to remove obstacles and secure sustained, positive attendance for all.

4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

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

- The morning register will be taken at **8:45am** and will remain open until **9:00am**.
- The afternoon register will be taken at **12:15pm** for Nursery children and will close at **12:30pm**.

- The afternoon register will be taken at **12:45pm** for Reception pupils and will close at **1:00pm**.
- For pupils in KS1 and KS2, the afternoon register will be taken at **1:00pm** and will close at **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 when 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* are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Contact the academy on 01536 430510 / admin@corbyprimaryacademy.org to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the academy with at least 2 emergency contact numbers 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 daily, and our Attendance Officer is responsible for entering the correct attendance codes and swiftly following up on absence.

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absences on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance lead providing them with more detailed support for 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 Lead 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 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 electronically using 'Arbor' and place all pupils on 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parents must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am 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 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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents 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 parents must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Parents should complete the online Pupil Leave of Absence form, which can also be found on our academy website, within the 'Parents' section.
Pupil Leave of Absence Request

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, it will be marked as late using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed, it will be marked as absent using the appropriate code

If a child is marked late in the register, a text message will be sent to parents requesting a reason for their child's lateness. If a child is late on 5 occasions or more, then a late letter will be sent home to parents.

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 parents on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If after three phone calls 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 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 parents 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.

Children Missing in Education

Schools have a statutory duty to work in partnership with the Local Authority to identify and support children who may be missing education (CME). Where a pupil has an extended period of unexplained absence, fails to return to school after a holiday, or their whereabouts become unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority's CME procedures. This includes making reasonable enquiries to establish the child's location and welfare, maintaining accurate attendance records, and promptly sharing relevant information with the Local Authority when required.

Reporting to parents*

The academy will regularly inform parents around general class statistics for attendance through Class Dojo. Within end-of-term reports in Autumn and Spring, as well as end of year reports in July, parents will be informed of their own child's attendance statistics. Class teachers will also discuss attendance during parents' evenings in October and March, whether attendance is a positive talking point or a cause for concern. Should attendance become a concern and fall below 95%, monitoring letters will be sent to parents making them aware of this and supportive measures will be put in place. Please see section 7.

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 events which are unavoidable, that subsequently prevent a pupil from attending school:

- Serious ill health substantiated by a doctor's letter/note.
- Personal accident or injury of a significant nature.
- Bereavement due to the loss of a close family member – a parent, grandparent, guardian, sibling.
- Victims of serious crime

This 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, 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 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 impact 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 penalty notices. The arrangements for these procedures can be found here: Penalty notices for non-school attendance | North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)

Mental health, SEND and medical absence

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long-term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support may need to be provided. Any support will be overseen by the leadership team, and it will be agreed through consultation with parents and relevant professionals on a case-by-case basis. This may include reasonable adjustments to expectations, provision or routines. A part-time timetable will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, as a short-term measure, and as a last resort, where it is clearly in the best interests of the pupil and forms part of a planned reintegration towards fulltime education.

Communication with the Local Authority for Pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan
Where an EHC plan pupil experiences declining or concerning attendance, the Academy will notify and work collaboratively with the Local Authority SEN team to review provision, remove barriers, and agree appropriate support.

7. How we monitor attendance

Individual pupils' attendance will be regularly monitored by the academy and the Local Authority and concerns promptly discussed with parents*.

The academy will regularly inform parents around general class statistics for attendance through Class Dojo. Within end-of-term reports in Autumn and Spring, as well as end of year reports in July, parents will be informed of their own child's attendance statistics. Class teachers will also discuss attendance during parents' evenings in October and March, whether attendance is a positive talking point or a cause for concern. Should attendance become a concern and fall below 95%, monitoring letters will be sent to parents making them aware of this and supportive measures will be put in place.

- A first letter will be sent to parents* if their child's level of attendance falls below 95%.
- If attendance continues to be of concern (the child has further absence within the monitoring period), a second letter will be issued, giving an improvement target, and offering pastoral support.

- If attendance continues to be a concern, the Family Support Worker will contact the family to offer support and discuss any potential reasons around absence.
- Should there be further concerns around attendance, a third letter will be sent out, inviting parents to meet with the Attendance Lead to discuss ways in which we can improve attendance and support the family should this be required. This could result in a Parent Contract being issued.
- A review period around attendance will be agreed with the Attendance Lead aiming to improve attendance.
- Invitations will be issued for a formal attendance meeting if there is no further improvement and support will be provided through the academy and the Local Authority. Ultimately a notice to improve or fixed penalty notice could be issued, and this will be communicated with parents.

Lates

Letters will be sent out advising on five or more late arrivals. Please note that late arrivals will reflect in the child's attendance (please see the section on punctuality) as above. Persistent late arrival to class (after registration has closed) could result in a fixed penalty fine being issued by North Northants County Council.

School staff will work with pupils, parents and other agencies to resolve school-related issues which are impacting 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 Partnerships Team.

Monitoring and analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data ever two weeks across the academy and at an individual pupil level. Each half term, the Attendance Lead will analyse key groups such as those in receipt of Pupil Premium funding, pupils on the SEND register, those who have English as an additional language (EAL), and gender. The Attendance Lead will also monitor for trends across the week, term and year, analysing where attendance is strong or whether it requires improvement. This data will allow for targeted support to specific groups of children and their families.
- Identify whether there are 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's absence national statistics releases. The academy will compare attendance data to the trust and national average.

Attendance Monitoring for Pupils with a Social Worker

The Academy will monitor attendance closely and share relevant attendance information with children's social care, ensuring joint planning to support safeguarding and engagement.

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 to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Align attendance procedures and interventions with the DfE's Attendance Interventions and Best Evidence (AIBE) framework, ensuring that actions are proactive, data-informed and consistent with the Academy's wider strategy for improving attendance. We will work with other schools in the local area deemed to have successful attendance statistics within the AIBE framework when striving to improve our own practices further.

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 Partnerships Team and Strengthening Families Partnership Team.
- Where there is a history of persistent absence or where attendance does not improve swiftly enough, the academy may intervene sooner so that pupils and families get the support they need as soon as possible.

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

Attendance	Category	Response
96%+	Expected/Excellent attendance	Universal support
95-90%	At risk	Early intervention (letters and informal meetings)
Below 90%	Persistent absence	Formal attendance plan with Deputy Principal
Below 50%	Severe absence	Multi-agency intervention (Local Authority)

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Trust or the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Principal. It will also be reviewed and amended in line with the Academy's strategy for improving attendance, and whenever necessary to proactively manage emerging data trends and respond appropriately to them.