



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

BEACON PRIMARY ACADEMY

Attendance policy



BEACON
PRIMARY
ACADEMY

Approved by:	Lisa Wright	Date: 1.9.25
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Introduction

Beacon 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 Beacon 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 parent/carers 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 Beacon Primary 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:

- Telephone before 8.30am
- Email
- Xpressions App

Please inform us of any planned absence in advance, this includes unavoidable medical appointments during the school day. Copy of this will need to be given into the office as evidence.

To inform us about a planned absence:

- **Leave of absence application form is available via email**
- **Contact the office by phone or email**
- **Copy of the appointment letter to be delivered to the office or via email**
- **Any absences due to medical reason to be evidenced by a copy of the letter, doctors note, nhs text or copy of the prescription**

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 attendance and support reduction in 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. This policy carefully follows DfE guidance in this area.

Our work on attendance is linked closely to our approaches to safeguarding and behavior.

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

- For parent/carers to ensure their children attend the Academy every day.
- For parent/carers to ensure that they contact the Academy at the start of the day whenever their child is unable to attend because of illness – (ensures the safety of the child).
- To ensure medical evidence is produced to support and appointments or absences.
- To ensure their children arrive at the Academy well prepared for the day and in the correct uniform.
- To contact the Academy whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from the Academy.
- To ensure their child is collected promptly from the Academy and that the Academy is notified in writing if their child is permitted to walk home alone in Y5/6.

The safeguarding procedures will be instigated if there is no contact with the parent and the child is still at the Academy one hour after the end of the day.

4. 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 **8.50am** and will be kept open until **9.00am**.

Where parent/carers 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 01754 879211 or enquiries@beaconprimaryacademy.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:

- They will attend the Academy everyday unless illness prevents this.
- They will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- They will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending.
- They will arrive at the Academy wearing the correct uniform.

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

Administrator staff will:

- Take calls from parents/ carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system

The Attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to our Educational Welfare Officer and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Working with education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Julia Stevenson and can be contacted via phone on 01754 879211 or via email to jstevenson@beaconprimaryacademy.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 Lisa Wright and can be contacted via phone on 01754 879211 or via email to lwright@beaconprimaryacademy.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

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 each school day and again after lunch.

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 phone, email or the App.

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 if 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. **This can be requested via the office and sent via email to request this absence.**

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
- Liaising with the Family Support Key worker to see if they can help getting them to school on time.
- Pupils who are persistently late (after close of register) will be referred to their Attendance Officer and Principal or another outside agency for further action.

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, consideration of police contact
- 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 on the Expressions App.

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:

- Immediate family bereavement or close friend bereavement.
- Other compassionate grounds.
- Immediate family wedding/civil partnership taking part on a school day.
- Family crisis.
- Examinations off site.
- Educational Opportunity – Sport and Performance.
- Visit to a new school.
- Family re-location visit.
- It is at the Principal's discretion to determine the number of days a child can be away from the Academy if leave of absence is granted.

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 working weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the office. 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
- Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveler 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 under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

7. How we monitor attendance

When a pupil does not attend, the Academy responds by contacting home on the first day of absence if the absence has not already been reported. This measure is undertaken to ensure a child's safety. If this has not been possible then a letter home via email itemising the child's unexplained absence is sent asking for a parental response.

- The Academy is particularly concerned about any pupil's attendance which fails to consistently meet 90%. This situation is deemed by the government to be persistent absenteeism.
- Pupils with poor punctuality will also be monitored by the Attendance Officer or other senior member of staff.
- If attendance or punctuality falls below 97% the parent/carers will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.
- The Attendance Officer is responsible for: first day phone calls or texts, second day phone calls or text, letters, and home visits. They will also follow the Local Authority's safeguarding procedures regarding a missing pupil.
- In continued non-attendance, the case will be discussed with the Attendance Officer and Principal responsible for referring to Educational Entitlement. This may, in appropriate cases, result in legal action.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be referred for legal action, if one has not been made at an earlier stage.
- Throughout, the Attendance Officer will meet with the EWO and Principal to keep everyone informed.
- Rewards and consequences are in place and explanatory charts are displayed around the Academy. This information is also provided to parents.
- Academy attendance meetings take place. Parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern, or pupils who have failed to improve their attendance following previous interventions, are invited to meet with the Attendance Officer and Principal.

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 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 school 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 school (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 Assessments, Emotional Based School Avoidance, Educational Psychologists, Pilgrim School, mental health trusts, Housing, Speech and Language therapists etc.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the trustor 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.