



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

# Attendance policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	Emma Butler	<b>Date:</b> 20.07.25
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	20.07.25	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	01.09.26	

## Introduction

Tiffield 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.

- 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 school on each day of absence by telephoning the school office or emailing [admin@tiffieldacademy.org](mailto:admin@tiffieldacademy.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, 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
- › Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Act early to address patterns of absence
- › Build 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

At Tiffield Academy, we know that attendance is very important – many of our pupils will have faced attendance and punctuality difficulties in the past and want to help pupils and families overcome these after joining our school. We understand the importance of working together with our families to ensure any barriers to attendance are identified and solutions found together. We will always be committed to understanding challenges faced by our pupils and families and recognize our role to play in ensuring we do all we can to support a pupil into school. Our dedicated Family Support Worker will liaise closely with families and work collaboratively to support excellent attendance.

If a pupil has an extended absence, for any reason, we will ensure we have worked with the family and other relevant professionals to make the transition back into school as supported and positive as possible.

We recognize that our pupils can face additional difficulties regarding punctuality and attendance and will always promote proactive and positive communication with home to address any ongoing challenges.

## 4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.15am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.15am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm..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 are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the academy on [admin@tiffieldacademy.org](mailto:admin@tiffieldacademy.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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. We understand that certain hospital and specialist clinician appointments may fall within the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Emma Stanyon, Family Support Worker, who can be contacted via email at [estanyon@tiffieldacademy.org](mailto:estanyon@tiffieldacademy.org) and telephone on 07435 168834

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 Emma Butler and can be contacted for attendance matters via [admin@tiffieldacademy.org](mailto:admin@tiffieldacademy.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 Family Support Worker to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Rachel O'Callaghan and can be contacted via the school office and email, for attendance matters, at [admin@tiffieldacademy.org](mailto:admin@tiffieldacademy.org).

Class teachers are responsible for supporting and promoting excellent attendance with their pupils and during interactions with families.

Administration 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 Family Support Worker in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Record attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, once they have received this information and on arrival of the pupils

## 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 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office or emailing [admin@tiffieldacademy.org](mailto:admin@tiffieldacademy.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 three 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. This can be done by contacting the school office on [admin@tiffieldacademy.org](mailto:admin@tiffieldacademy.org).

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

We will work with families where there are ongoing punctuality difficulties. We appreciate that our pupils may experience additional challenges in the morning and will identify a suitable plan to support punctuality. The morning routine at school is very important for our pupils to feel settled and secure and therefore our aim will always be to remove barriers and ensure they have the best possible start to the school day.

## 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 will also contact any other relevant professionals involved in a pupil's care, such as social workers. If we have significant concerns regarding the safety and well-being of a child, we may also contact 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
- We will conduct home visits at an appropriate time – this could be on the first day of an absence we have not been notified of. We may also complete a home visit if we have been notified of an absence on the day

## Reporting to parents/ carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This information will be available via Arbor and our families are encouraged to regularly check this.

If we have concerns regarding a pupil's attendance levels, we will always contact home and arrange a meeting with relevant staff members to understand the situation and provide support for this to improve.

## 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 four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, please email the school office on [admin@tiffieldacademy.org](mailto:admin@tiffieldacademy.org) for a form.

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.

### **Penalty notices**

The Principal (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. Before referring to the local authority for a penalty notice, the academy will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 6 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the academy has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (83.33%) over a period of ten school weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine without further reference to you for a penalty notice. This warning is valid for 12 months.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with local authority processes set out in the local code of conduct. They will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

### Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

We will always make reasonable adjustments, where applicable, and will work with families to ensure school have taken all necessary action possible to remove barriers to attendance and support a pupil into school.

### Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

We will always make reasonable adjustments, where applicable, and will work with families to ensure school have taken all necessary action possible to remove barriers to attendance and support a pupil into school.

All our pupils have an education health and care (EHC) plan and where 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

We will ensure that a phased transition back into full-time education is as smooth as possible by working together with families and understanding the needs of the pupil.

## 8. How we monitor attendance

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will regularly monitor attendance levels in the Academy. We will understand the context of individual circumstances and ensure that school and home are working together effectively to remove barriers where they exist.

We will submit a Child Missing from Education referral when the threshold for this has been met.

### 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 class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including 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 the School Attendance Support Service (SASS) in West Northamptonshire

If a pupil has persistent unauthorised absences we will work closely with the family in the first instance. If there are ongoing attendance concerns, we will work with the local authority to determine next steps.

## **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.