



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST



SEATHORNE PRIMARY ACADEMY



Attendance policy

Approved by:

Mr. Matthew Wood
Principal

Date: September 2024

Last reviewed on:

September 2024

Next review due by:

September 2025

Introduction

Seathorne 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.

- Seathorne provides a welcoming and caring environment where all members of the Academy feel secure and valued.
- Seathorne expects students to arrive on time every day.
- Seathorne will support parents in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Seathorne believes 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:

- Calling the main office as soon as possible **01754 764689**
- Message via the Groupcall Xpressions App
- Emailing admin@seathorneprimaryacademy.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:

- Complete a Leave of Absence Request Form which can be requested via the main office.

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 Seathorne Primary Academy, we:

- Invest time into building partnerships with families, listening to them and understanding barriers to attendance. By talking with parents/carers early on we can identify any barriers to learning, such as hunger, health, transport, bullying, extended family illness or other similar challenges. We can then provide the family with the support or resources that will help to improve attendance, directed via our Family Welfare Officer. We encourage families to build a positive relationship with this contact.
- Keep parents up to date with our attendance policy and expectations for pupil's attendance and on-time arrival.
- Expect staff to set a positive role model for punctuality and good attendance.
- Provide individual and whole class rewards and incentives for good attendance.
- Support pupils' return to school after absence (including late arrivals) to ensure children are fully reintegrated and not at a disadvantage with their learning due to their time out of school.

4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Year Group	Pupils must arrive by...
Nursery	9am
All other Pupils	8:45am

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am for Nursery and 8:45am for all other pupils and will be kept open no longer than 30 minutes after the sessions begins. Before the register has closed, pupils who are late will be marked as such, using the appropriate code, and the minutes late will be recorded. After the register has closed, pupils will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45pm or 1:15pm depending on staggered lunch timings and will be kept open no longer than 30 minutes.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time, this means their child must attend every day the school is open and in school and ready by the required start times for each session, 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 Tele: 01754 764689, Email: admin@seathorneprimaryacademy.org or message on Xpressions 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 our Attendance and Inclusion Officer, our Family Welfare Officer or our Senior Leader for Attendance. All of whom can be contacted via Tele: 01754 764689 or Email: admin@seathorneprimaryacademy.org

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.
- Understand the importance of punctuality and good attendance.

Class teachers are expected to:

- record attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office each morning and afternoon.
- Work with the Inclusion Officer by holding Support Meetings for Attendance with parents.
- Report attendance to parents during Parent / Teacher Meetings.
- Raise concerns with the attendance team.

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 Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

The Attendance and Inclusion 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 the Family Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence.

The Attendance and Inclusion Officer is Mrs. B. Davies and can be contacted via telephone 01754 764689, email bdavies@seathorneprimaryacademy.org or via Xpressions.

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- 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
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Supporting class teachers and delivering CPD to improve attendance
- 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 Mr. P. Baker and can be contacted via telephone 01754 764689, email pbaker@seathorneprimaryacademy.org or via Xpressions.

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- 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

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

- Communicating the Academy's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

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 calling the Academy office 01754 764689, email admin@seathorneprimaryacademy.org or via Xpressions message.

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 72 hours, 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 we have reason to suspect that this absence should be classed as unauthorised, for example due to a term-time holiday rather than an illness, the academy will carry out a home visit to clarify this and/or require evidence that the academy or Lincolnshire County Council deem appropriate.

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 complete a Leave of Absence Request Form which are available from the school office or Attendance and Inclusion Officer.

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

Class Teachers record children arriving late and minutes late on a daily basis. Parents are reminded throughout the year about the impact of lateness on a child's opportunities to learn.

Repeated lateness is addressed on a one-to-one basis, either with a telephone call or a support meeting with the Family Welfare Officer and Inclusion and Attendance Officer.

Lateness is monitored on a weekly basis.

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 the pupils' parent/carer calls will be made to pupil's emergency contacts.
 - If the call is not answered, a message will be left for the parent, requesting them to inform school of their child's absence. If no reply by 11pm, a second, third and fourth phone call is to be made.
 - If no contact has been made, on the second day of absence a home visit to be made by the Family Welfare Officer or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) on the next following school day.
- 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

End of term attendance letter displaying child's attendance against the required attendance of 95%

In addition, the academy will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during Parent/Teacher Meetings and in their end of year written report.

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.

Exceptional circumstances are **NOT**:

- Availability of cheap flights and/or holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Parent/carer work commitments
- Poor weather experiences during school holiday periods
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term/half term.

Exceptional circumstances **MAY** be:

- Grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill – and you must leave in an emergency
- Significant trauma in the family recently and a holiday will benefit the child – this must be supported by a doctor's letter
- A one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time, e.g. family wedding/funeral.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

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.

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 the Academy 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
- 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.

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.

Please see the [Lincolnshire Code of Conduct](#) for Lincolnshire's approach to this.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Seathorne Primary Academy emphasises a comprehensive and empathetic approach. Some of the approaches the academy might use to support are:

- Engage both parents and children in open, sensitive conversations to understand any home issues impacting attendance
- Consider any Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) or medical issues and identify specific school-related challenges
- Utilise Early Help Support when necessary
- Address any practical issues such as transport, housing, or proximity to the nearest school
- Complete a stress survey with the pupil to assess their well-being and discuss any concerns with teachers or support staff
- Deliver a tailored approach, with regular check-ins to monitor progress for each pupil
- Involve the Inclusion Team
- Provide continuous praise and positive messages about school
- Implement a "buddy system" to help the child spend time with friends and feel more connected
- Provide relevant support for pupils experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Seathorne Primary Academy sets and maintains high expectations for the attendance, engagement and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending school. It is important to recognise that, in many instances, attendance at the academy may serve to help with the underlying issue as much as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten their anxiety about attending in future.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.

Seathorne Primary Academy emphasises a comprehensive and individualised approach. Some of the approaches the academy might use to support are:

- Consider part-time/reduced timetables and collaborate with health providers to make necessary adjustments in school, ensuring these are reviewed regularly.
- Use email to communicate with parents supporting their child in hospital and develop health care plans as needed, which may include a part-time/reduced timetable. A small amount of work may be sent home, and risk assessments are conducted if necessary, with involvement from the Medical and Disability Services (MDS).
- Work closely with mental health providers and parents/carers to create individual plans to support pupils experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)
- Provide support for any tricky issues the pupil faces
- Involve the Inclusion Team who will review plans regularly
- Monitor and check in with parents
- Implement a “buddy system” to help the pupil spend time with friends and send a small amount of work home if needed
- Implement risk assessments as necessary, with MDS involvement, and always considering the needs of parents.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the academy becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil’s needs, the academy will inform the local authority.

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

Seathorne Primary Academy will work closely with families to re-integrate pupils after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence. We will ensure a supportive and structured reintegration process which considers the parents’ needs throughout.

Some of the approaches the academy might use to support are:

- Arrange a return-to-school meeting with parents to discuss the pupil’s needs and offer necessary support
- Devise a tailored plan, including a phased return if needed through a part-time/reduced timetable, which is reviewed regularly to gradually build up attendance back to full-time.
- Identify appropriate staff to monitor pupils through regular checks and/or stress surveys to capture the pupil’s voice.
- Involve the Medical and Disability Services (MDS) to support/advise on/address any specific health needs
- Offer lunchtime clubs and other social activities to help the pupil reconnect with peers

8. How we monitor attendance

We closely monitoring early indications of pupils who are falling below 90% and contacting parents as often as needed to provide the families with information regarding attendance. By talking with parents/carers early on, we can identify any barriers to learning, such as hunger, health, transport, bullying, extended family illness or other similar challenges. We can then provide the family with the support or resources that will help to improve attendance. Families also will then have a named contact to build up a positive relationship with.

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 special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads 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
- Share handouts during parent's evenings / fundraisers and celebration assemblies to continue to raise awareness and set expectations around attendance
- Provide a "drop-in desk" during Parent/Teacher Meetings to target key families
- Share leaflets promoting good attendance and punctuality to every family, particularly in December and January
- The Family Welfare, Inclusion and Attendance Officer and Designated Senior Leader for Attendance have regular meetings and are able to sign-post families who need support to relevant services.
- There is a fortnightly Inclusion Meeting which highlights any families that need additional support.

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.