

# **Skegness Academy**

## **Attendance Policy**



**Reviewed :** Sept 2024

**Next review due by:** Sept 2025

## Aims

The aim of this policy is to secure the highest rate of attendance for all our pupils. It ensures that we effectively meet our obligations with regards to Academy attendance including those laid out Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#). This Academy policy also aligns to Greenwood Academies Trust (GAT) Pupil Attendance Policy which also includes links to other relevant legislation and guidance.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of parents and those with 'parental responsibility' to secure education for their children of compulsory school age whether at school or 'otherwise', and, if they are at school, to send them to school regularly.

The Academy is committed to achieving their expectation that every child attends every possible session on time to ensure they can thrive and achieve. This policy outlines how we will fulfil our responsibilities to ensure that pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. This will include ensuring reducing persistent and severe absence. As part of this we will work with all partners including families, multi agencies and the local authority to identify and remedy barriers to attendance.

## Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Academy understand that not all absence is avoidable. However, for all unexpected or planned absence there are procedures to manage these effectively, to ensure the safety and well being of all pupils.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- genuine illness
- a medical appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
- being in hospital or receiving hospital treatment
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil or their parents belong. If necessary, the Academy will seek confirmation from the religious body.
- Attending an interview for a job or a place at a college
- Taking part in an off-site examination.

Absence will not be authorised for any of the following reasons:

- Unauthorised term-time holidays (including visiting family abroad)
- Study leave.
- Looking after the house or waiting for workmen/deliveries etc
- Looking after siblings, including dropping them off at school/nursery
- Helping with housework or a family business
- Being unhappy or not getting on with others at school
- Being up late the night before, including for a family problem

- Feeling under the weather
- Needing to take medication.

This is not an exhaustive list. It is at the academies discretion whether an absence is authorised. If a pupil has 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) with a 10-week period (this could be over different term/academic years) the local authority may issue a penalty notice.

## **Timings of the Academy Day**

By law the Skegness Academy is required to keep an attendance register and all students must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Pupils need to be onsite for the start of the Academy Day at 8.40am.
- AM register opens at 8:45 and closes at 9:15am.
- A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L). After 9:15am a pupil will receive a U code.
- A pupil who arrives late should report to reception.
- Afternoon roll call is at 12.00. The academy closes at 15:10pm.

## **Unexpected absence**

- Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by calling 01754 879122 (option1) by 9:15am or as soon as practically possible. They should call on every morning of an absence.
- If appropriate the Academy may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.
- If Skegness Academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of an illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this.
- If no reason has been received, parents will be contacted by text message.
- If the Academy do not receive an appropriate response following the text message parents will receive a phone call or home visit. Home visits will be carried out routinely on every third day if an absence continues. Following this if the Academy remains unaware of the reason for absence, they may call upon the Local Authority services and /or the Police to ensure the pupil's safety.

## **Medical or Dental Appointments**

- Where possible medical or dental appointments should be arranged for outside of the school day. Where this is not possible the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time possible.
- Parents need to notify the Academy in advance of a planned medical or dental appointment by calling the attendance line 01754 879122 (option1) or email [SKA-attendance@skegnessacademy.org](mailto:SKA-attendance@skegnessacademy.org)
- Whilst absence for medical and dental appointments will be authorised when the Academy has been informed, this still counts as an absence and will therefore affect the pupil's percentage attendance.

## **Leave of Absence**

As parents have a legal responsibility in accordance with section Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#) to ensure their child receives full time education, The department for education guidance states that holidays and other leave of absence should not be taken during term time.

As such the Principal will only consider applications for leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances. This will be done on an individual basis considering the specific facts, circumstances, and the context of the request. It is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

If a leave of absence is not approved e.g. term time holiday, and the length of time equates to 10 sessions in a ten-week period the local authority may issue a penalty notice.

Applications for leave of absence should be in writing to the Principal.

## **Key Contacts**

Absence Line: 01754 879122 (option1)

Absence email [SKA-attendance@skegnessacademy.org](mailto:SKA-attendance@skegnessacademy.org)

Education Welfare Officer: Mrs J Limb [jlimb@skegnessacademy.org](mailto:jlimb@skegnessacademy.org)

Senior Leader for Attendance: Mrs S Ferrier [sferrier@skegnessacademy.org](mailto:sferrier@skegnessacademy.org)

SENCo : Mrs Lorna Coates-Metheringham [SKA-senadmin@skegnessacademy.org](mailto:SKA-senadmin@skegnessacademy.org)

If your child is having any issues in school, please do not keep them at home. If your child has SEND please contact the SEND department if you require assistance to encourage attendance. You can also contact the relevant year team staff using the information below. Please note, if you choose to keep your child off school without contacting the academy for support the absence will be deemed to be unauthorised.

Year	Head of Year	Deputy Head of Year
Year 7	Mrs Pienak <a href="mailto:apienak@skegnessacademy.org">apienak@skegnessacademy.org</a>	Mrs Laws <a href="mailto:klaws@skegnessacademy.org">klaws@skegnessacademy.org</a>
Year 8	Mrs Johnson <a href="mailto:ljohnson@skegnessacademy.org">ljohnson@skegnessacademy.org</a>	Mr J Divilly <a href="mailto:idivilly@skegnessacademy.org">idivilly@skegnessacademy.org</a>
Year 9	Mr Wells <a href="mailto:hwells@skegnessacademy.org">hwells@skegnessacademy.org</a>	Miss Jones <a href="mailto:cjones@skegnessacademy.org">cjones@skegnessacademy.org</a>
Year 10	Mrs Matson <a href="mailto:jmatson@skegnessacademy.org">jmatson@skegnessacademy.org</a>	Miss Parker <a href="mailto:kparker@skegnessacademy.org">kparker@skegnessacademy.org</a>
Year 11	Mr B Fenwick <a href="mailto:b Fenwick@skegnessacademy.org">b Fenwick@skegnessacademy.org</a>	Miss Parker <a href="mailto:lparker@skegnessacademy.org">lparker@skegnessacademy.org</a>
Sixth Form	Miss Langdale <a href="mailto:klangdale@skegnessacademy.org">klangdale@skegnessacademy.org</a>	Mrs Hunt <a href="mailto:jhunt@skegnessacademy.org">jhunt@skegnessacademy.org</a>

## **Reporting to parents**

In addition to communication relating to absences parents will receive termly updates about their child's attendance.

## **Ethos**

We use a range of incentives to praise and reward pupils who have good attendance and punctuality. Good attendance is celebrated throughout the Academy on a weekly basis using achievement assemblies, prize draws, competitions, and certificates. We also recognise pupils who

have secured significant improvements to their attendance or punctuality and parents are informed of the improvements by letter or text message.

We promote good attendance throughout the Academy in many ways including it in our annual achievement evening, welcoming pupils back following absence and displaying key messages highlighting the importance of attendance. Key to ensuring pupils attend is ensuring they feel safe and respected and have access to an engaging curriculum. All pupils have access to the breakfast club every morning and we provide a range of parental engagement opportunities throughout the year.

### **Attendance monitoring**

Pupils' attendance is monitored daily. Rates and patterns at an individual pupil level are also monitored. If high levels or patterns of absence are identified, we will contact parents.

We monitor overall levels of absence including to identify pupils who are, or are at risk of, being classed as persistent and severe absent at cohort, year group and pupil group level each term. This includes reasons for absence. Rates are compared to Trust, Regional and National averages. We use this information to identify pupils and groups of pupils who are most in need of additional support and ensure the timely implementation of the key interventions outlined in our tiered approach.

### **Vulnerable Students and Long Term Medical**

Research shows that good attendance at school provides an additional safeguard for vulnerable pupils. The Academy will inform the families or Social Worker of those students who are vulnerable or at risk, immediately, if a student is absent or attendance is causing concern. A plan will be in place if there are regular barriers to attending. If a pupil has an Education, Health & Care plan, the Academy will communicate with the LA EHCP Team at an early stage once they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the child's needs and arrange a clear plan of action to support the child's attendance.

In addition, any student who has a long-term illness or medical issue, which prevents them from attending school for extended periods of time will receive a home visit at least once a week in line with our safeguarding policy. The needs of the student will be assessed on an individual basis to ensure they can access an education.

### **Academy strategy for addressing absence including persistent and severe absenteeism.**

Academy support is designed to prevent the need for legal interventions or sanctions. However, if the academy is unable to successfully engage with families and unauthorised absence continues leading to the pupil becomes persistent or severely absent, referrals will be made to the local authority. In these cases the academy will continue to work with the pupil and family to improve attendance.

Percentage attendance	Impact on learning	Interventions
-----------------------	--------------------	---------------

99-100%	Children are accessing all learning opportunities	<b>EXPECT</b> Inclusion in termly attendance incentives
96-98%	Some learning opportunities are being missed	<b>MONITOR</b> Tutors to notify students when attendance falls below 98% and discuss if any support is needed to improve attendance
93-95%	Risk of underachievement	<b>LISTEN &amp; UNDERSTAND/FACILITATE SUPPORT</b> Deputy Heads of Year/Heads of Year to contact parents to discuss barriers to attendance and provide support where needed.
93-95%	Risk of underachievement	<b>FACILITATE SUPPORT</b> If no improvement following this conversation, Letter 1 to be sent from attendance officer to parents. If no improvement following this letter, parents are invited to a meeting with the attendance officer to discuss barriers and support where required. Attendance Officer develop an Attendance Support Plan with student and parent. Education Welfare Officer weekly discussion with Attendance Officer
90-92%	High risk of underachievement	<b>FORMALISE SUPPORT</b> Following support from the attendance officer, if attendance continues to fall Letter 2 to be sent to parents from the Education Welfare Officer. If no improvement following letter 2, parents are invited in for a formal Parent Contract meeting with the EWO. Implement and review agreed actions from PCM and monitor impact.
PA Below 90%	High risk of underachievement	Categorise PA pupils needing multi-disciplinary support / not needing multi-disciplinary support Those requiring MDS – Referral to Education Welfare Service Targeting Support meeting with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service Agree MDS plan and implement. Monitor impact. Request LA attendance contract if attendance continues to decline. Those not requiring MDS- Request LA attendance contract Request ESO if attendance contract or voluntary EH has not worked. Request notice to improve if ESO not worked Request penalty notice when 10 or more O sessions in 10 week period if above actions not impacting or engaged with.
Severe Below 50%	Very high risk of underachievement	<b>FORMALISE SUPPORT</b> Referral to Education Welfare Service Targeting Support meeting with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service for severe absence Agree joint action plan with LA – Implement Review action plan – Implement changes if required

### **Effect of a Penalty Notice being issued**

As stated in the national framework for Fixed Penalty Notices, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be considered if your child meets the threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence, in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The combination of unauthorised absences can be met in any combination of unauthorised absence, for example, 6 sessions (3 days) taken in one week and 1 session (1/2 day) for the following 4 weeks. In addition, the 10 school weeks can also span over different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions (1 day) of unauthorised absence in a Summer Term and a further 8 (4 days) within the Autumn Term).

A Fixed Penalty Notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. From the autumn term 2024, 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period will be charged at a higher rate. Please see below for details:

- The first Fixed Penalty Notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second Fixed Penalty Notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third Fixed Penalty Notice cannot be issued within a 3-year period. In this case where the unauthorised threshold is met, alternative action will be taken, and the school will consider prosecution or other legal intervention.