



One Degree Academy

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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ODA Attendance Policy

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Summary

The academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend well. All academy staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

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1. Aims

Our academy aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Working together with parents/carers to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

2.1 Legislation

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school [attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern academy attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996 & The Education Act 2002](#)
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school [census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

2.2 Types of absence

Every absence from the academy will be classified by the academy (not by the parents). This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Pupil absence will be recorded as 'Unauthorised' when the academy is not satisfied with the reasons for the absence.

Family holidays and doctor's appointments (where possible) are not permitted during term time. Students have 13 weeks' school holiday per year and further time off on teacher training days. We kindly ask parents to make routine doctor and dental appointments during these dates in order to avoid unnecessary absence.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We will ask for the parent/carer to commit to an ODA attendance contract. This is to help ODA support families and monitor the attendance.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral and attendance system.

3. Academy procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

Students must arrive in the academy by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:35pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the academy every school day of an unplanned absence. This must be done by calling the academy by 8:00am. Parents/carers have a legal duty to report their child's absence.

Parents/carers should call the academy landline and leave a message on the dedicated answer phone. Emailing the academy is not an acceptable way of making contact.

The academy may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons and have a negative impact on their day.

A child will be marked late if they arrive after 8:45am.

We will monitor lateness and send parents weekly notifications when a child's lateness becomes a concern. This will normally be if they have a punctuality record of 95% or less. If no improvement is seen, this will result in a phone call from the child's teacher and then a meeting with the parent.

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The academy must be notified of the reason for all late collections. This is in order to safeguard the child and protect their well-being. Continuous lateness collecting your child could result in late fees and in extreme cases a referral to the local authority for neglect.

3.5 Following up absence

The academy will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Please see below our escalation procedure of non-reporting your child's absence.

1.	If the academy has not heard from a parent/carer by 9:30am, a member of admin staff will attempt to make contact with the parent or carers. If they are unable to make contact, they will call all emergency contacts listed on the child's record to ascertain the whereabouts and safety of the child.
2.	If no contact with the contact list can be made, or if they are unable to give a sound reason to the absence by 11:30am this will be escalated to a member of the senior team and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed.
3.	A home visit may be carried on the afternoon of the first absence by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the family address to ascertain the safety and well-being of the child.
4.	If on arrival at the family address, there is no answer, a social services safeguarding referral may be made by the academy due to safeguarding concerns about the child's well-being and safety.

3.6 Reporting to parents

We will report your child's attendance termly as part of their termly report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Principal will not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be '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. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion. Each ODA student will receive a letter 3 times a year outlining the expectations around taking time out of school for holidays and the potential repercussions of doing this.

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A form is available at reception with further details enabling parents to request leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- Medical / dental appointments - where these cannot be arranged outside of academy time
- 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 students 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

4.2 Legal sanctions

ODA can apply to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from academy, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to apply for a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A high number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Academy deploys a range of strategies for promoting good attendance including:

- Rewards children who have 100% attendance or above through termly assemblies
- Attendance certificates
- Notification to parents when their child's attendance improves during a week

One Degree Academy reports attendance to parents termly, providing individual attendance figures vs the academy average for comparison. The academy also displays our whole school attendance figure in our weekly bulletin.

6. Attendance monitoring

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The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis so as to identify any trends or changes in attendance.

If a pupil's absence drops, or falls below 98% we will contact the parents via text to remind them of the importance of attendance.

Our process is as follows:

1. Text to parent
2. Invite to Panel Interview Meeting and contract
3. Pre Court Assessment Meeting
4. Penalty warning letter and referral to local authority (EWO)

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by a senior leader. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy