



# Attendance Policy

## Introduction

Regular attendance is essential for every student's learning, wellbeing and future opportunities. Every day in school matters. Missing just one day is five lessons lost; missing ten days is fifty lessons lost, more for our Y11 students with Lesson 7. Attendance is directly linked to academic achievement, safeguarding, confidence and long-term life chances.

At Droylsden Academy, attendance is everyone's business. This is not a slogan — it is a shared belief that shapes our culture, our expectations and our commitment to every child. We are passionate about promoting excellent attendance because we know it transforms outcomes, builds resilience and establishes healthy habits that last long after students leave school.

Our ethos, "Be Here to Belong," reflects our belief that students thrive when they feel connected, valued and part of our community. Being in school every day strengthens friendships, builds confidence, and helps students develop the social and emotional skills they need for life.

The Department for Education states that *"securing good attendance cannot be left to a single individual or team; it must be a whole-school effort"* and that *"every day in school makes a difference to long-term outcomes."* We fully embrace this principle.

The Importance of Excellent Attendance:

- Every day counts. Missing school means missing learning, and even small amounts of absence accumulate quickly.
- Achievement is strongly linked to attendance. National data shows that students with attendance above 96% achieve significantly higher grades.
- School is more than lessons. It is where children build friendships, confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging.
- Regular attendance supports mental health and wellbeing. Routine, structure and positive relationships with staff and peers are protective factors recognised in government guidance.
- Absence reduces social connection. Students miss opportunities to spend time with friends, take part in enrichment and develop strong peer relationships.
- Good attendance builds lifelong habits. Reliability, punctuality and resilience are essential skills for employment and adult life.

We work within an inclusive attendance approach, ensuring students feel safe, happy and supported. We recognise that some students face barriers to attendance, and we work closely with families and external agencies to remove these barriers.

Our expectation is that every child aims for 100% attendance, with 96% as the minimum acceptable standard. Attendance below 90% is classed as Persistent Absence (equivalent to 19 days missed). Attendance below 50% is Severe Absence (equivalent to 95 days missed).

**This policy operates in conjunction with:**

- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Send Policy
- Home Visit Policy

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Person Responsible: Deputy Headteacher

Approving Body: Local Governing Body

- Alternative Provision Policy
- Behaviour Policy

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## 2. Legal Framework

**2.1.** Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that a child, of compulsory school age, attends school regularly and punctually. A parent is described by the DfE as both natural parents, whether married or not, any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person, or any person who cares for a child or young person.

**2.2.** The Education Act 1996 also places a statutory responsibility on the Local Authority to ensure that parents secure education for children of school age and allows for the Authority to use legal enforcement as necessary.

**2.3.** The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 requires schools to take the attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. Register must be marked in accordance with DfE regulations using the designated attendance codes.

## 3. Daily Attendance Procedures

Our daily attendance procedures are led by the Attendance Leader who is supported by the Attendance, Year and Student Services Teams.

### 3.1 Reporting an Absence

Parents must contact school by 8.30am on each day of absence. Informing school of an absence does not guarantee it will be authorised; the Academy will determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised based on the information provided and in line with DfE guidance.

#### Minor ailments

Minor ailments such as headaches, tiredness, mild colds, stomach discomfort or feeling “under the weather” **do not require absence**. We encourage students to attend so we can support them in school. Building resilience is a key part of preparing students for life beyond school, and attending with minor ailments helps develop healthy habits for adulthood. Absences due to minor ailments will be authorised initially; however, if a student has experienced three or more broken weeks of absence (where at least one session has been missed in a week) or if there are historical concerns regarding attendance, parents will be informed that medical evidence will be required for all future absences to be authorised.

#### Medical appointments

Medical appointments must be arranged **outside school hours wherever possible**. Where unavoidable, appointments should be made **as late in the day as possible (after 2.00pm)** so students miss minimal learning. Students must attend school **before** the appointment. Full-day absences for routine appointments will not be authorised.

## **Students feeling unwell in school**

If a student becomes too unwell to remain in school, **a member of staff will contact parents** and request collection. If a student contacts home directly, the absence will **not** be authorised. If a parent phones school to say their child has contacted them, the expectation is that the parent will collect the child, and the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** unless school first aid staff have assessed the child as too unwell to remain.

### **3.2 Start of the Day**

School opens at 8.00am.

Registers open at 8.35am and close at 9.05am.

Students arriving after 8.35am but before 9.05am receive a late mark.

Students arriving after 9.05am receive a U code, which counts as an unauthorised absence for the full morning session.

### **Late Arrivals and Detentions**

Students arriving late will receive a **same-day late detention** in the form of **isolated lunch**. This applies **regardless of whether parents have phoned ahead**. Parents are expected to inform us of lateness for safeguarding, but this does **not** remove the sanction. This is an Academy decision and part of building strong routines.

During isolated lunch, students who normally have a school meal will be provided with **a sandwich, fruit and a drink**.

### **No Acceptable Excuses for Lateness**

Inclement weather, temporary traffic lights, roadworks and other common travel disruptions are **not valid reasons for lateness**. These are everyday occurrences and part of normal travel planning.

Parents/carers are expected to ensure students leave home in plenty of time. School opens from **8.00am** to support punctuality.

### **Parental Responsibility**

By sending a child to Droylsden Academy, parents/carers are agreeing to follow all Academy policies and procedures, including those relating to attendance and punctuality.

Ten U codes within a rolling 10-week period will result in a Notice to Improve issued by the Local Authority.

### **3.3 Unexplained Absence**

First-day calling takes place for all absent students.

Staff may follow up even when a voicemail has been left, to ensure clarity and safeguarding.

Absence texts are sent as soon as registers close at 9.05am, once checks have been made.

We understand this may cause concern if a child arrives late after the text is sent; however, if a child is not present when the register is taken, we must alert parents promptly for safeguarding reasons.

### 3.4 Home Visits

Home visits will be carried out on the third day of absence wherever possible, or sooner if safeguarding concerns exist.

Home visits may also be made for vulnerable students, PA/SA students or where concerns persist even if contact has been made.

Staff conducting home visits must follow safeguarding procedures and behave professionally at all times.

The Academy will not tolerate abuse, aggression or threatening behaviour towards staff.

Home visits are recorded for safeguarding purposes.

### 3.5 Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

The Academy decides whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents may provide a reason, but the school will determine the appropriate code.

#### Examples of authorised absences

- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours with medical evidence
- Religious observance (maximum 1 day per academic year)
- Participation in approved sporting, musical or educational events
- Bereavement (close family only)
- Where a child is deemed too unwell to attend school by a Doctor

#### Examples of unauthorised absences

- Absence due to minor ailments that do not prevent attendance
- Holidays taken during term time
- Absence due to oversleeping, missed transport or poor morning routine
- Looking after siblings or family members
- Birthdays, shopping trips or family days out
- Parents keeping children off due to their own illness
- Students contacting home to request collection
- Absence without medical evidence when requested
- Absence following a refused leave request

Unauthorised absences may lead to a **Notice to Improve**, a **Penalty Fine**, or **Legal Action** where concerns persist.

## 4. Monitoring, managing and encouraging good Attendance

### 4.1 Monitoring

Attendance is reviewed daily, weekly and half-termly.

Students with broken weeks, persistent absence or concerning patterns are monitored closely.

Actions may include phone calls, meetings, attendance passports, home visits or formal intervention.

## 4.2 Encouraging Good Attendance

At the Academy, we are committed to a comprehensive approach to supporting students' attendance. We provide the following support:

- Breakfast club is available from 8.00am.
- Recognition is shared with students who demonstrate excellent or improving attendance weekly, half-termly and termly.
- Attendance passports support students to rebuild routines and confidence.
- Attendance information is shared regularly with parents.
- Attendance letters are issued digitally through A Star.
- Personalised letters home at the end of every half-term to update on student attendance
- Attendance and punctuality newsletter issued half-termly to provide key message, support and guidance for maintaining healthy habits and routines to promote good attendance

## 5. Support for Parents and Students

We understand that every family's circumstances are different, and some students face genuine barriers to attendance. Our approach is supportive, early-intervention focused and centred on strong relationships.

Support may include but is not limited to:

- Year Leaders and Year Managers support
- Attendance Team support
- Learning support and Send Team

And signposting to:

Antony Seddon Centre

TOG MIND

Early Help

School Nursing Team

Kooth

Change Grow Live

Talk Listen Change

LGBT Foundation

Children's Social care

Family Hub

Youth Services

Young Carers

Bridges

Housing Advice & family support agencies

We work collaboratively with families and external professionals to remove barriers and help every student attend regularly. However, where attendance does not improve despite support, the Academy must follow statutory processes in line with DfE guidance.

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Person Responsible: Deputy Headteacher

Approving Body: Local Governing Body

## 6. Missing in Education:

The Academy has a duty of care for all our students, should we deem your child as missing in education in line with local guidance we will inform the Local Authority who will carry out checks with relevant agencies and make the ultimate decision as to whether the child remains on our roll.

The **national definition** of a child missing from education is:

*"All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time - usually agreed as 15 school days or more".*

For further information please refer to Tameside MBC's Children Missing from Education Guidance March 2023: [Tameside Children Missing from Education Guidance](#)

## 7. Formal proceedings

### 7.1 Stage 1

Parents are contacted to make them aware of concerns.

Stage 1 letters are issued at three broken weeks or three days (six sessions) of absence, whichever comes first.

Thresholds increase as the school year progresses.

Students may have supportive intervention from the year team at this stage in the form of Attendance Passport.

### 7.2 Stage 2

Triggered when concerns continue or absences increase.

A Stage 2 letter invites parents to attend a meeting to discuss concerns and support options.

Weekly monitoring may begin through mentoring, check ins and monitoring through Attendance Passport.

If no improvement is seen, penalty fines or legal action may be considered.

### 7.3 Attendance Meetings

Our attendance meetings are designed to provide a supportive, inclusive space where we work in partnership with families to understand any barriers to attendance and identify practical solutions together. They focus on offering guidance, encouragement and tailored support to help every student achieve improved and sustained attendance.

Parents are invited to discuss concerns and together we agree on an Attendance Improvement Plan.

If parents do not attend, the plan is completed in their absence, and the action points will be shared electronically.

### 7.4 Notice to Improve and Penalty Fines

A **Notice to Improve** will be issued when a student reaches **10 unauthorised sessions (10 UAs)** within a **rolling 10-week period**.

If further unauthorised absences occur after a Notice to Improve has been issued, the Local Authority may issue a **Penalty Fine**.

A Penalty Fine will also be issued when a child accumulates **10 sessions of unauthorised holiday absence**.

National fine rates:

- £80 if paid within 21 days
- £160 if paid within 28 days

### **7.5 Persistent or Severe Absence**

Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 90%, while severe absence is defined as attendance below 50%.

Where parents fail to engage or support improvement, prosecution may be initiated.

### **7.6 Term-Time Leave**

The Academy does not authorise term-time holidays under any circumstances, as there are 13 weeks of school holidays each year which provide valuable time for rest, family activities and travel without disrupting learning.

Unauthorised holidays of 5 days or more will result in a Penalty Fine by the Local Authority.

## **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

All members of staff at Droylsden Academy share the belief that attendance is everyone's responsibility. We are fully committed to our ethos of 'Be Here to Belong', and every member of our school community plays an important role in ensuring that this is the lived experience of all our students.

### **8.1 Governing Body**

- Oversee attendance strategy and statutory compliance.
- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support the Academy to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, hold leaders to account and work with them to support improvement.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the students who need it.

### **8.2 Headteacher**

- Set targets for whole school attendance, persistent and severe absence as well as vulnerable groups in agreement with the Governing Body
- Support this policy and ensure it is implemented consistently across the Academy
- Monitor attendance data on a daily, weekly and half termly basis
- Consider requests for leave of absence in term-time
- Sign off the appropriate documentation in the event of any legal proceedings

### 8.3 Deputy Headteacher - Standards in Pastoral Care:

- Holds overall strategic responsibility for attendance and ensures it is fully aligned with the school's safeguarding priorities and statutory duties.
- Sets the vision, direction and whole-school expectations for attendance, ensuring robust systems and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed.
- Reports to governors on attendance trends and impact, ensuring accountability and driving continuous improvement across the school.

### 8.4 Assistant Headteacher - Standards in Learning and Achievement:

- Supports the Deputy Headteacher in delivering the strategic vision for attendance, ensuring it remains a high-profile whole-school priority embedded within school culture and expectations.
- Drives implementation of attendance strategies across the school, clearly communicating expectations and holding SLT line managers accountable for impact.
- Works in close partnership with the Attendance Leader to quality assure daily systems, evaluating impacts of attendance strategies and supports to hold Year Teams accountable for the attendance of their cohorts.
- Works with the Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Leader to monitor attendance data regularly to identify trends, vulnerable groups and emerging concerns, ensuring swift and proportionate intervention.

### 8.5 The Assistant Headteachers will:

- Work as an attendance champion within a year group providing support to the Year Team on attendance and punctuality
- Work as part of a wider school strategy with key vulnerable cohorts in improving attendance
- Provide attendance data and the appropriate reports as requested by SLT agenda items and Governing Body

### 8.6 Attendance Leader

The Attendance Leader is responsible for the day-to-day operational management and supports the strategic oversight of attendance across the school. They monitor and analyse attendance data, coordinate early intervention and support for students and families, and work closely with staff to ensure that attendance systems are implemented consistently and effectively. They lead on safeguarding, early intervention and formal processes.

- Oversee all daily attendance procedures
- Lead first-day calling, home visits and follow-up
- Meet with parents to discuss concerns and agree Attendance Improvement Plans
- Lead formal processes including Notices to Improve, Penalty Fines and prosecutions
- Provide attendance data to SLT, governors and external agencies
- Work closely with Education Welfare Services and other partners
- Ensure compliance with DfE guidance and local authority expectations
- Work with the relevant members of SLT to drive whole-school attendance improvement and strategic planning
- Ensure attendance is understood as everyone's responsibility
- Escalate concerns to the Local Authority where attendance does not improve despite support
- Provide updates to families each half term via A Star

## 8.7 Attendance Team

The Attendance Team plays a central role in safeguarding, early intervention and attendance improvement. They ensure that attendance is monitored rigorously and that concerns are addressed promptly. They will:

- Make daily first-day absence calls
- Send absence texts and A Star letters
- Follow up missing marks and unexplained absences
- Conduct home visits for safeguarding, persistent absence or welfare concerns
- Meet regularly with parents to discuss attendance concerns
- Support families to overcome barriers
- Provide attendance data for safeguarding, pastoral and academic monitoring
- Liaise with external agencies including Early Help, Education Welfare and Social Care
- Support Year Managers in early intervention and monitoring
- Ensure all procedures are followed in line with DfE guidance
- Encourage students to build resilience and positive habits for life

The Attendance Team will always work with families first to support improvement. However, where attendance fails to improve, they will escalate concerns to the Attendance Leader and the Local Authority as required.

## 8.8 SENCo and SEND team:

- Identify and address SEND-related barriers to attendance, ensuring reasonable adjustments and targeted support are in place to enable regular school attendance.
- Monitor attendance of pupils with SEND, particularly those at risk of persistent or severe absence, and contribute to early intervention planning.
- Work collaboratively with pastoral leaders, families and external agencies to align attendance strategies with EHCP provision and statutory duties.

## 8.9 Heads of Year (Head of Upper, Head of Lower and Head of Y11)

- Provide strategic oversight of attendance within their year groups.
- Analyse trends in attendance data looking at PA and SA
- Attend meetings and contribute to whole-school attendance planning.
- Lead on attendance transition data for their year group (including Year 6–7 and internal year transitions), analysing patterns and identifying pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence, and implementing early, preventative action to secure strong attendance from the outset.

## 8.10 Year Managers

Lead on daily attendance intervention. They:

- Promote excellent attendance within their year group
- Monitor attendance daily and contact parents of absent students
- Conduct home visits as directed by the Attendance Team
- Lead early intervention and support students to overcome barriers
- Work closely with families to build routines and resilience
- Attend Attendance Panel Meetings
- Support students to develop strong habits for life

## 8.11 Form Tutors

- Promote good attendance daily with check ins and weekly data sharing through Celebration Day during the tutor programme
- Discuss concerns with students and take accurate registers.

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- Encourage students to attend regularly and build positive habits.
- Place students on Attendance Passports when directed by the Year Manager.

#### 8.12 Teachers:

- Take registers accurately and on time in every lesson, using the correct codes and ensuring data is up-to-date.
- Help create a classroom environment that *makes students want to be here* — promoting a sense of belonging, engagement and the importance of good attendance.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality with pupils, and raise any concerns or unusual patterns promptly with the pastoral/attendance team.

#### 8.13 Parents/Carers

- Ensure regular attendance and punctuality.
- Contact school daily for absences before 8.30am.
- Provide a minimum of 3 emergency contacts.
- Provide medical evidence when requested.
- Arrange medical appointments outside school hours wherever possible.
- Avoid term-time holidays.
- Understand that unauthorised absence may lead to fines or prosecution.
- Support healthy bedtime routines and strong morning routines to support attendance and punctuality

#### 8.14 Students

- To attend school regularly (this means each day the Academy is open to students) and punctually
- Not to leave the Academy during the school day without prior permission from a member of staff, and without signing out
- To discuss any barriers to attendance with their Head of Year, Year Manager or Attendance Leader.
- Build resilience and positive habits for life.
- Students should maintain healthy routines so they are well rested, organised and punctual, taking responsibility for being ready to learn each day

## 10. Monitoring and evaluation

**10.1.** Whole school attendance data, and attendance data by year group and student group, is monitored on a daily and weekly basis. The attendance of identified students is also monitored on a daily basis. In addition, a termly report is prepared for SLT and the Governing Body by the Attendance leader, supported by the Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher.

**10.2.** The effectiveness of our policy and procedures are evaluated throughout the year through discussions with the Attendance Team, Year Managers and SLT and against our attendance data. The Policy is formally reviewed by the Governing Body annually.

## 11. Useful information

Pupils already benefit from 175 days each year outside of school for rest, family commitments and personal time. This provides ample opportunity for relaxation and recreation. The remaining 190 school days are critical for sustaining academic progress, safeguarding wellbeing and ensuring pupils access the full breadth of educational provision.

The following table highlights the impacts on attendance:

Attendance	Days Missed Per year	Meaning
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96%	7.5	1.5 weeks lost learning
95%	9.5	Nearly 2 weeks learning
90% Persistent absence	19	Almost 4 weeks lost learning
85%	29	Over half a term missed
80%	38	Serious impact on life chances
50% Severely absent	95	Half a year missed

### 11.1. Key DfE Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance

The Department for Education’s statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* provides clear expectations for schools, parents and local authorities. It outlines the importance of early intervention, strong relationships with families, whole-school responsibility for attendance, and collaborative multi-agency support. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)

Schools, trusts and local authorities all have clearly defined statutory roles and a shared duty to promote good attendance and address barriers affecting pupils. The guidance emphasises a “support-first” approach, helping families overcome barriers before legal action is considered.

### 11.2. Building Good Morning and Evening Routines

Creating predictable home routines helps children feel settled, confident, and ready for learning. Although this isn’t covered in detail in the statutory guidance, it aligns directly with the emphasis on early intervention, supportive relationships and a whole-school culture that enables pupils to access education consistently. [\[nasuwt.org.uk\]](https://www.nasuwt.org.uk)

You might include tips such as:

#### Evening Routine Tips

- Prepare school uniform, bag and equipment the night before.
- Establish a regular bedtime to ensure your child gets enough sleep.
- Avoid screens for at least an hour before bed to promote healthy sleep.
- Talk positively about the next school day to reduce anxiety.

#### Morning Routine Tips

- Wake up at the same time each day to keep morning routines calm.
- Allow plenty of time for breakfast, washing and getting ready.
- Build in a “leaving the house” buffer time to avoid rushing.
- Encourage independence—older students can pack their own bag and organise their timetable.

These suggestions support the DfE’s emphasis on removing barriers, building resilience, and creating supportive environments where children feel ready to learn. [\[nasuwt.org.uk\]](https://www.nasuwt.org.uk)

### 11.3. Local Support: Tameside Education Welfare Service

The **Tameside Education Welfare and School Attendance Service** provides practical support for families experiencing difficulties with attendance. They focus on early help, positive relationships and removing barriers so children can benefit fully from school. [\[tameside.gov.uk\]](https://www.tameside.gov.uk)

Their work includes:

- Liaising with schools about attendance concerns.
- Offering advice and support to families facing challenges.
- Helping parents meet legal responsibilities for regular attendance.
- Signposting to other agencies where appropriate. [\[tameside.gov.uk\]](https://www.tameside.gov.uk)

**Useful links:**

- **Tameside Education Welfare Service**

<https://www.tameside.gov.uk/Education/The-Education-Welfare-Service>

Tameside's wider attendance and school information:

- <https://www.gov.uk/education-attendance-council/tameside> [\[gov.uk\]](#)