

WTD: Attendance – Daily Attendance for Families

Dixons Trinity Academy is committed to ensuring that students and parents/ carers understand the absolute importance of full attendance at school. Absence has a detrimental effect on a student's academic progress. Poor attendance or sporadic absences may also be an indicator of underlying issues that need resolving either inside or outside of school. Securing great attendance for all students is at the heart of our work. The target for all students is to achieve 100% attendance and 100% punctuality. The minimum expectation for all students is attendance over the academic year of 97%

The importance of being in school every day

If your child misses school on a regular basis, they are damaging their future life choices. Nationally, it has been proven that children with poor attendance in primary school miss out on making the expected progress in vital literacy and numeracy skills, and find it difficult to catch up.

In secondary school, 19 days' absence correlates, on average, to a grade at GCSE in all subjects. 97% attendance is the Academy's expectation but we are striving for 100% every day. Students under 90% are classed as persistent absentees by the Government and, if all attempts to improve attendance has failed, the case may be sent to the Local Education Authority. They will then investigate the case and potentially prosecute parents for non- attendance at school; this can involve large fines. It is ultimately the parents' responsibility to ensure their child attends school, but we can support those families as much as possible within the academy.

Punctuality

Late to school is defined as students not being in registration when the register is taken. If a student arrives after 10.30am then an unauthorised absence code of 'U' will be applied to the register. We ask that all students are in the school building no later than 15 minutes before the official start time so that they can get prepared and organised for the learning that day.

It is essential that all students arrive at the academy in plenty of time to organise themselves for the start of their day. The academy opens for students at 7.15 to work in supervised areas and breakfast is served in the Heart Space from 7.30, to support students in having a successful start to their day. We recommend all students arrive to school by 7.45. Any students who arrive after 8.00 will receive a punctuality correction. This is to ensure all students are able to hand their homework in, visit their locker, organise their belongings and are in the correct location for the start of Morning Meeting at 8.03. If a student arrives after 8.33, they will receive an absent mark for the morning session and this will therefore impact on their attendance figure. Any student who is marked absent, families will receive a text message informing them when their child is absent or late. In our secondary schools, lateness results in a same-day correction in line with the behaviour policy.

Challenging attendance

Students should only be staying off school if they are infectious or physically unable to get out of bed. Otherwise, they should come into school and try their best. Often if they have a headache or stomach ache, it is because they are dehydrated. Allow students, in certain circumstances, to carry a water bottle if necessary. If they are still unwell, the well-being champion will assess and ring for them to be picked up if needed. Parents can bring in medication/painkillers for students to be given in school by the nurse; they must complete a medication form if this is brought into school.

Absence

If your child is ill / absent from school with no advance notice, families must:

- Make contact with school by calling before 8.30.
- If the office is not open, please leave a message on the answerphone with an explanation for absence.
- Make contact with school for any subsequent days of absence, before 8.30.

After five days of absence, a member of academy staff may conduct a home visit and will provide work to be completed at home. This is to support families and to try to minimise the impact of prolonged absence from school, as every day of missed learning is an opportunity wasted.

Leave of Absence

We always inform parents that we do not authorise any holiday requests and they will be liable to a fine of £60 per parent per child. If they take one day off they will affect their child's learning; even if they complete work whilst absent they will miss key information given by a teacher in class.

Leave of absence during term time is no longer permitted. Any extended absence from the academy will be counted as unauthorised and can lead to a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority. In order to avoid personal opinion and to ensure complete fairness for all, we refer all planned leave of absence to the authority. Parent should complete a LOA request. Any routine medical appointments must be made outside of school hours. Where an emergency appointment is absolutely necessary, families must:

- obtain a leave of absence form from reception
- notify the academy as soon as possible
- bring the student back to school in a timely manner
- Obtain evidence of the appointment (e.g. appointment slip / text message).

The Government states that a student may be taken out of the academy during term time for exceptional circumstances only, and never for more than five days. If exceptional circumstances occur, families must:

- obtain a leave of absence form from reception to request permission and submit the form at least one month in advance of the planned absence
- meet with the Principal to discuss the absence
- Obtain evidence of travel (if overseas) e.g. plane tickets.

Permission will be granted only in exceptional circumstances and is at the discretion of the Principal. After any prolonged absence, a return to school meeting will be requested with parents and the Principal.

Reasons for illness

Below are common reasons why families may refuse to send their child in. If they give any of these reasons to you on the phone as to why they may have more time off school in the future, here are some explanations you can offer to rationalise why they should be in school:

- **Asthma:** This is an illness they will have to manage for the rest of their life. If the student is struggling with asthma you can suggest a visit to their GP or Asthma nurse around how to manage it, so they can still be in school. It might be that they may not take part in excessive amounts of exercise during PE, or they may walk a little slower up the stairs. At times, they may be allowed a lift pass when their asthma is particularly bad.

- Hayfever: this is also an illness they will have to manage for the rest of their life. If the student is struggling, again, suggest a visit to their GP as they may need stronger medication than just off the shelf.
- Headache or feeling sick: This is not a reason to stay off school. It is likely that they are dehydrated, so suggest the child drinks plenty of water and has eaten something. They must be in school as they are not actually ill.
- Temperature or fever: This is also not a reason to be off school. Encourage the family to ask the child take paracetamol to reduce the temperature. We can ask if their temperature has been taken using a thermometer, and to ring the doctors if they think it is excessively high.
- Cold: Again, this is not a reason to stay off school. Students should be encouraged to take paracetamol.
- Expeditions: This absolutely not an excuse to be off school. Recovering from an expedition due to tiredness is not an appropriate absence. Students must be in school the following day after an expedition.

Completing home visits

SLT are most likely to complete home visits with the attendance team, but, at times, the advisor maybe the person that child has the strongest relationship with and is likely to be the most appropriate person to get the child into school. We do not tell parents a home visit will be conducted; if the child is too ill to be at school we would anticipate they will be at home unless they were being cared for by another adult.

During a home visit, we will to take a note of who else was present, their relationships with others in the house and the surroundings.

Attendance Monitoring

Our Behaviour and Attendance Officer monitors closely the attendance of all students at the academy and acts accordingly should student attendance become a concern. We know how strong the positive correlation is between attendance and attainment, and therefore our attendance target for all students is 100%. Any attendance below 98% will incur a level of intervention to support students and families. The below table shows the level of monitoring families can expect:

Category	Level	Action	% Attendance	Weeks per year	Days per year	% Chance of attaining 5 Grade 5-9
100% attendance	Level 1	Celebrated publicly during appreciations each half term Recognition expedition	100	0 days	0 days missed	94.8
Excellent attendance	Level 2	Celebrated publicly during appreciations each half term Recognition expedition	98-99.99	3 days	3 days missed	
Risk of underachieving	Level 3	Text home informing family that student attendance has fallen to 97	97-97.99	1 week	5 days missed	74.3

	Level 4	Attendance officer phone home Advisor contact during Dream Team feedback No Dream Team sticker	95-96.99	1.5 weeks	7.5 days missed	
Serious risk of underachieving	Level 5	Meeting with HOY during Dream Team feedback No Dream Team sticker Letter sent home	93-94.99	2.5 weeks	12.5 days missed	60.4
Severe risk of underachieving	Level 6	SLT and Attendance manager meet parent. Serious risk letter sent home	90-92.99	3 weeks	15 days missed	34.7
Extreme risk of underachieving	Level 7	SLT attendance meeting. Support from cluster lead. Attendance plan put in place and reviewed 6 weekly	89.99 and below	3.5+ weeks	17.5+ days missed	26.7