

What to do attendance ... Families



Rationale

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 limiting their future life choices. Nationally, it has been proven that children with poor attendance in primary school and secondary 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.

At Dixons Trinity 97% attendance is the Academy's minimum 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 the registers been completed at 8.32am then an 'L' (late mark) will be recorded, unauthorised absence code of 'U' will be applied to the register if they arrive to the academy after 9.02am. 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 and maximise every minute.

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 7.15am 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 7.45am. Any students who arrive after 8.12am 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 8.12am. If a student arrives after 9.02am, 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 with the support from staff. Often if they have a headache or stomach ache, it is because they are dehydrated. We allow students, to carry a reusable water bottle if necessary. If they are still unwell, they will be assessed by a member of the staff first aid trained 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 or 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.

Where there are concerns, 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

Leave of absence during term time is not permitted. Parents are informed that we do not authorise any holiday requests and they will be liable to a fine of £60 per parent per child, per week.

A recent decision has been made by Bradford Council to change their approach to situations where families have disregarded this guidance. This is where families take two or more periods of unauthorised leave in a 12-month period, or when a period of four or more weeks of leave is taken. In these instances, **Bradford Council will utilise the option to start legal proceedings via the magistrates' court, instead of issuing a penalty notice.** This means that parents may be liable to receive a significantly higher fine (up to £2,500 per child, per parent) if found guilty, as well as receive a criminal record, which may be reportable to employers (for example, via a DBS Check). In rare circumstances, magistrates can consider a custodial sentence for up to 3 months. This change will come into force from 1 April 2023.

If your child takes one day off this will affect their learning; even if they complete work whilst absent the students will be at risk of missing out on content and expert knowledge delivered by a teacher in class on that day.

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. Parents should complete a Leave Of Absence 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. Work will be provided for any students who are absent and this will be checked upon returning to the academy.

Reasons for illness

Students are expected to be in school every day, unless Public Health guidelines suggests otherwise. Where you feel it is appropriate to keep your child at home, please contact the attendance officer at the academy for guidance and next steps.

Completing home visits

Academy staff will complete home visits and on some occasions this may include a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Safer Schools Police officer. Home visits can be unannounced by the academy staff and we ask our families to support us with this process.

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

Attendance Monitoring

Our attendance team 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 97% 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 Letter sent home. 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. Letter sent home.	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