

Monks Copenhall Academy

Attendance Guide for Parents and Carers



Why attendance matters:

We have always been proud of the close, co-operative relationship which exists between the Academy and home over the matter of attendance. Clearly, both parents/carers and teachers want children to attend regularly and only to be absent from the Academy when it is absolutely necessary. The children themselves also find that they will achieve more from their year's education if they are good attenders.

Attendance is an important aspect of our behaviour system as children can only achieve 'Respect Points' if they attend.

The DfE guidance '[Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024](#)' states that excellent attendance and punctuality at school is "essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their **attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances**".

What is considered excellent attendance?

We consider excellent attendance to be **98%-100%**. The Local Governing Board has identified 96% as our minimum Academy attendance. Children who miss school frequently miss out on key learning and are at risk of developing gaps in their knowledge and not making as much progress as their peers.

The table below shows how a child's attendance percentage equates to the number of lessons missed over a year.

| Attendance During One School Year | Number of Days Missed | Number of School Weeks Missed (approximately) | Number of Lessons Missed (approximately) |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 100% | 0 days | 0 weeks | 0 lessons missed |
| 95% | 9 days | 2 weeks | 50 lessons missed |
| 90% | 19 days | 4 weeks | 100 lessons missed |
| 85% | 29 days | 6 weeks | 150 lessons missed |

What we ask parents/carers to do to support

This is contained in our policy and is based on the DfE Guidance:

- Ensure your child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies and telephone the Academy office as soon as possible if your child is going to be absent on each day of absence.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when your child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments outside of the school day where possible.
- Please encourage your child to arrive at the Academy in good time for the start of the day (see below).

If your child is at risk of persistent absence:

- Work with the school and local authority (where applicable) to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

If your child is classed as persistently absent (<90% attendance):

- Continue to work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Punctuality

It is vitally important that children arrive at school on time so that they do not miss key learning at the start of their first lesson. When children arrive after the register has closed, this is coded as an unauthorised absence. Please see the start times below.

Start Times:

Year 3/4/5/6 – Welcome Time: **8:35am-8:45am**. Children arriving after 8:45am will be recorded as late.

Reception/Year 1/2 – Welcome Time: **8:45am-8:55am**. Children arriving after 8:55am will be recorded as late.

Every Minute Counts

| Lateness = Lost Learning (figures below are calculated over a school year) | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 5 minutes late each day | 3 day lost |
| 10 minutes late each day | 6.5 days lost |
| 15 minutes late each day | 10 days lost |
| 20 minutes late each day | 13 days lost |
| 30 minutes late each day | 19 days lost |

How can the Academy support parents/carers?

We are very keen to work with parents and carers to improve attendance, especially when a child is at risk of becoming persistently absent. Any parent or carer can request support by speaking to their class teacher or by contacting the Academy office.

When we meet with parents/carers, we will discuss any barriers to attendance and work together to formulate a plan of support. This meeting may involve Mr R Alcock (Attendance Lead), Mrs S Baker or Mrs R Hancock (Family Link Workers), Mrs P Prince (Education Welfare Officer) and Mrs J Tams (Office Attendance Manager).

Examples of the support that the Academy may provide on a case by case basis is as follows:

- Family Link Worker support for families to help with any behavioural or emotional causes of absence. 'Extra Help' or 'Family Help' plans can also be used to support attendance and punctuality.
- Referrals and signposting to other agencies, including the school nurse where appropriate.
- 'Voice of the Child' activities to explore the in-school and out-of-school barriers.
- Access to the Breakfast Club to encourage punctuality or support with drop off arrangements.
- Wellbeing Team interventions to support with other barriers, such as anxiety about attending or friendship issues.

What are in-school and out-of-school barriers to attendance?

In-school barriers are circumstances or influences that are impacting on a child's reluctance or ability to attend, such as anxiety about school, friendship difficulties, bullying, not feeling safe and academic worries.

Out-of-school barriers are related to external factors beyond the school, such as parent/carer ill health, pupil illness or health condition, transport, child care arrangements and bereavement.

Where it is suspected that in-school barriers are affecting your child's attendance, we will arrange for an adult who is familiar to your child to complete an activity that explores any barriers to their attendance.

What happens if a child's attendance continues to fall or support is not engaged with?

There will be another meeting to explore further support and discuss other options, such as involving outside agencies, Cheshire East Local Authority or starting a voluntary Early Help Assessment (known as 'Family Help')

Should attendance not improve, the Academy will hold formal conversations with parents to discuss the potential need for legal intervention and work with Cheshire East Local Authority to secure attendance where necessary. Where there are safeguarding concerns, support will be intensified through Children's Social Care.

What are the categories of absence?

Authorised

An authorised absence is one which the Academy is allowed by the DfE to give permission for. Any other absence is recorded as unauthorised absence. However, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' restricts the school's capacity to authorise absence.

After consideration of individual circumstances, the following types of absence from the Academy will normally count as authorised.

- Illness (when the Academy is notified of the absence)
- Dental or medical appointments (appointment card provided)
- Exclusion from the Academy
- Agreed leave of absence as a result of expectational circumstances (see below)

Unauthorised

The following types of absence must count as unauthorised and could result in a fine:

- Absences for which we receive no explanation
- Lateness - after the register has closed
- Unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time
- Shopping during Academy hours to buy uniform, shoes, haircuts etc.

Monks Copenhall Academy will robustly follow up all unauthorised absences (U, O and G codes). When the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks), another warning letter will be sent to the parents/carers indicating that the Local Authority has been informed. Following this, Cheshire East Authority may commence a monitoring period. If any unauthorised absences occur during this monitoring period, Cheshire East Authority may issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers/guardians by post.

In the case of unauthorised Leave of Absence in term-time, no warning letter will be sent, and the Local Authority will issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers/guardians by post.

Please note that the Academy does not benefit financially following the issue of a fine/penalty notice.

Medical Absence

Any medical absences in excess of 4 days will need to be supported by medical evidence for them to be authorised. This does not have to be a doctor's note but can be dated prescriptions, medication, or appointment card/letter/text either by GP/ Nurse/hospital.

If the Academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness or has reason to believe a holiday has been taken in term time, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless medical evidence can be provided (e.g. medical appointment card, letter from GP/ Hospital, prescription).

How can I request 'Leave of Absence' for my child (e.g. for a funeral, religious observance, holiday etc.)?

A 'Leave of Absence' form can be collected from the Academy office. Where possible, we ask families to complete the 'Leave of Absence Request' form two weeks before the proposed date of absence. The request will then be considered and a written response will be issued within 7 days, explaining whether the leave of absence will be authorised or unauthorised. Please be aware that where procedures for requesting Leave of Absence are not followed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and coded 'O' in the register, or 'G' where the school has not granted leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday.

Does the Academy authorise holidays in term time?

The Academy cannot authorise any leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore, leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

What should I do if my child is reluctant to attend school but they are not ill?

It is important that you discuss concerns with the class teacher or one of our Family Link Workers so that support can be put in place, including discussing with the child the reasons for not wanting to attend.

When should I keep my child at home because of illness?

If your child has a temperature when checked by a thermometer, we advise that they stay at home. Cheshire East and NHS England have produced guidance for common illnesses, explaining how long a child should be absent for, if at all.

If you are unsure about whether your child is well enough to attend and would like advice, please contact the Academy office. If you speak to a member of staff when your child is a little 'under the weather' but well enough to attend, the class teacher and teaching assistant can monitor them during the day and phone home if they become unwell.

How does the Academy recognise and encourage excellent attendance?

We use rewards to recognise excellent attendance as an achievement in its own right and use the following rewards and incentives:

100% for the whole year – The children are given a special 100% attendance badge, a certificate and are entered into a prize draw to win a voucher.

100% for a term – The children are given a certificate and entered into a draw to win a voucher.



Class with the best attendance (weekly) – The class with the best attendance win a certificate and keep the attendance trophy for the week. They are also rewarded with 10 minutes extra playtime.

Where can I find my child's attendance percentages?

All parents/carers have access to their child's Attendance Certificate by logging into Arbor. This will detail the sessions that your child was present and absent and the codes that have been used, including whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Safeguarding Procedures

To further increase the safeguarding of our children, the Academy must follow the following routines:

- Hold at least **2** phone numbers for different adults to contact in the absence of a child.
- School staff will complete a welfare check on the first day of absence if a reason for the absence has not been communicated to school by parents/carers. Before completing this, contact with parents/carers will be attempted via phone, email and text message.
- If no contact can be made when visiting the home, the police may be informed if the above procedures have been completed.

Attendance Team

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance or request support, speak to your child's class teacher, or contact the main academy office on 01270 814040 or email admin@monkscoppenhall.cheshire.sch.uk



Mr R. Alcock
Attendance Lead



Mrs S Baker
Family Link Worker



Mrs R Hancock
Family Link Worker



Mrs J Tams
Office Attendance Manager



Mrs P Prince
Education Welfare Officer