

Attendance and Punctuality expectations

Darton Academy believes that excellent attendance and punctuality are the key to academic success. We strongly believe in working together with parents/carers to support consistently high expectations of attendance and punctuality. This is a vital part of preparing students for their future adult life and careers. We request that parents support the school to keep absenteeism and lateness to an absolute minimum.

At Darton Academy we strive for every student to attain 100% attendance. Our minimum expectation for every student is 97% through the academic year.

Punctuality

All Students are expected to arrive on time at the academy, ready for lessons. Students should arrive before 8.20am in order for them to be punctual to their first lesson which begins at 8.25am. Any student who arrives in after 8.20 am will need to sign in at student reception and will be marked as late and may receive a C4 Late detention.

Guidance on Attendance and Punctuality

What is good attendance?

Attendance percentages are not like examination results: an attendance percentage needs to be in the high nineties before it can be considered good.

Consider the following examples:

- An attendance record of 90% might seem good but is equal to 1 day missed per fortnight. If this continues from Years 7 to 11, a total of six month's education will be lost.
- An attendance record of 80% might seem acceptable but is equal to 1 day missed per week. If this continues from Years 7 to 11, a total of one year's education will be lost.

Each year, a large number of students in every year group achieve 100% attendance records, showing that this is an achievable target. In addition, several students have achieved this level of attendance in successive years. We expect all of our students to achieve a minimum of 97% attendance.

Why is good attendance important?

Good attendance at school is vital for pupils to achieve their full educational potential. Pupils with good attendance records benefit in the following ways:

- Continuity of learning which makes progress and retention easier
- Improved performance in class work and coursework
- Enhanced performance in examinations
- Continuity of relationships and friendships

- Good references for further education or employment
- Good habits formed for later life and future careers

What can parents/carers do to support their child to achieve good attendance levels?

Parents/carers play a vital role in ensuring good attendance records for their children. Below is a list of suggested strategies:

- Encourage full attendance.
- Stress the importance of full attendance to your child.
- Do not allow your child to have time off for minor complaints or illnesses: if they are well enough to be up and about, they are generally well enough to attend the academy. We focus heavily on building resilience and overcoming minor ailments is part of this valuable process.
- Monitor your child's attendance. You can monitor their attendance every day via the MyChildAtSchool App. We share information throughout the week in form time and highlight attendance in weekly assemblies.
- Take any vacations in school holidays, not during term time.
- Try to book any medical or dental appointments out of school hours or make them towards the very start or end of the day. Please note we will not authorise all day absence for medical appointments.
- Ensure your child is punctual; students should be in the academy before 8.20 am, to be ready to start learning in their first lesson which begins at 8.25 am.

Student Absence

The welfare of children is paramount and remains an absolute priority for us as an academy. With this in mind, we need to ensure that we receive communication about any child who is unexpectedly absent. Parents/carers should contact Darton Academy before 8:45am giving the reason for the absence.

You can do this in two ways.

- Telephone 01226 232306 and choose option 1 leaving a message on our answer machine;
- Email attendance@dartonacademy.org.uk or use the School Comms text messaging service. You need to confirm your child's name, form, and the reason for the absence.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the academy every day their child is absent from the academy.

Please note, we will make contact every day of a student's absence even when we have been informed that the student is unwell the previous day. This is to ensure that a situation does occur where a student returning fails to arrive, with the parents/carers assuming they are safe in school and us assuming they are at home unwell.

...Changing lives

If we do not receive notification of absence, we will follow the procedure as outlined below:

- Telephone call to all contact numbers that have been provided by you to gain verbal confirmation that your child is absent with your knowledge (please ensure that you provide us with three up-to-date contact numbers for your child). One of the numbers should be a mobile telephone number.
- If we are not able to contact you by phone or establish why your child is not in school, then a member of staff may carry out a home visit on the morning of absence (please ensure that we have all possible addresses that your child may be at if absent/sick).
- In the unlikely event that we cannot gain confirmation that your child is absent with your knowledge, we are now required to contact the police for them to make enquiries as to the safety and well-being of your child. With enhanced and more efficient communication between home and school, we can all be sure that the children in our care are safe and well.

Authorisation of Absence

Only the academy can authorise an absence. An explanation given by a parent/carer is not, necessarily, sufficient for the academy to authorise an absence.

According to guidance to schools from the Department for Education, an absence may only be authorised if the absence is due to:

- Pupil illness, though we may require medical evidence to support such an absence. Such evidence could include appointment letters, photographs of medication or prescription. We will work supportively with parents/carers to ensure we are able to acquire appropriate evidence in the event that written evidence is not accessible.
- Leave granted by the academy in exceptional circumstances. Please note the academy will not authorise an all-day absence for medical appointments. Evidence of medical appointments/interviews will need to be supplied to the academy.
- Religious observance where applicable.

Absences which the academy is not able to authorise include:

- Looking after a relative, pet etc.
- A shopping trip, even if this is for uniform.
- Day trips.
- Lateness after the register has closed.
- Being unable to participate in an academy activity e.g., Games or a school trip.
- Remaining at home to wait for deliveries, repairmen etc.

Holidays in Term Time

Any absence, including for holidays, is detrimental to learning. Parents/carers should **not** take students out of school for holidays during term time. Government legislation now states that holidays during term time cannot be authorised, except in exceptional circumstances.

What are the Penalties?

First Offence – The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Second Offence (within three years) – The second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years) – The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent per child

Further information can be found using the link below:

[Changes to penalty notices for school absence \(barnsley.gov.uk\)](http://barnsley.gov.uk)

Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable education. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent/carer who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.

The Academy works together with the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Education Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison.

Persistent Absence

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their 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 the full support of parents/carers to tackle this.

[The academy follows a clear and transparent policy on attendance which can be accessed here.](#)

What can I do if my child starts missing school?

Children can show their worries and concerns in a number of different ways: e.g., a reluctance to go to school, feigning illness, failure to attend school even though the child is sent, and missing lessons whilst in school.

If a problem seems to be emerging parents/carers should:

- Talk to your child to try to find out if there are any problems or worries in school, on the journey to or school or at home.
- Contact the academy as soon as possible our attendance team can be contacted throughout the academy day on 01226 232306 option 1 or via email attendance@dartonacademy.org.uk. They will be happy to help you and your child with any concerns you may have around attendance.

Did you know?

- Darton Academy expects 100% attendance.
- 90% attendance means missing on average one ½ day EVERY week.
- 90% attendance means the equivalent of missing 4 whole weeks in one school year.
- Over 5 years, this is the equivalent of missing HALF a school year.
- Missing just 17 days in one year can mean dropping a full grade at GCSE.
- Historically, 5 or more good GCSE passes can increase wages by 42%.
- Schools are open 195 days a year that leaves 170 other dates for leisure time.
- A child on holiday for 2 weeks during term time will miss 50 one-hour lessons. Some never catch up. Being late 10 minutes each day for one year is equal to missing approximately 6 school days