

What to do... Attendance at Dixons Trinity Chapeltown

Dixons Trinity Chapeltown is committed to ensuring that students and families understand the importance of 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 Authority. They will then investigate the case and potentially prosecute parents for non-attendance at school; this can involve large fines. It is ultimately 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 registers close then an unauthorised absence code of 'U' will be applied to the register.

For secondary age students the academy opens at 7.15 so that students can work in supervised areas and breakfast is served in the Dining Hall from 7.30, to support students in having a successful start to their day. We recommend all students arrive to school by 7.50. Any students who arrive after 7.56 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 8.00. If a student arrives after 8.30am, 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. If a child arrives after 9am then the family are also called. In the secondary phase, lateness results in a same-day correction in line with the behaviour policy.

For primary age students the academy opens at 8.30 Students can enter the building and go straight to their allocated classroom. We recommend all students arrive to school by 8.40. Arriving at this time ensures students have a strong start to the day by taking part in DEAR, Maths Meeting and attending planned intervention too. If a student arrives after 8.40, they will receive a late mark for the morning session, and this will therefore impact on their attendance figure too. Late marks are monitored weekly by the attendance and behaviour team. Students meeting each stage will trigger a call by the relevant member of staff to create a plan of support to improve student's punctuality.

Stage	Outcome	Reason
Stage 1	Class teacher call – supportive check in	3 lates within 1 week / 5 + across two weeks
Stage 2	Phase Lead call – supportive check in	7 + across consecutive weeks
Stage 3	SLT Link call - remind of expectations	Lates increase by 3 incidents
Stage 4	VP call – create a plan of support	Lates increase further by 3 incidents
Stage 5	Letter & meeting with VP / HoP	No improvement seen

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 stomachache, it is because they are dehydrated. We allow students to carry their Dixons Trinity Chapeltown water bottle at all times. If they are still unwell, Mountain Rescue 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 Mountain Rescue; 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:



- Contact school by calling before 8.00 in secondary and 8.30 in primary
- If the office is not open, please leave a message on the answerphone with an explanation for absence
- Contact school for any subsequent days of absence, before 8.00 in secondary and 8.30 in primary.

After three 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, this 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 some families may refuse to send their child in. You may receive the following explanations and rationalisation from staff if any of these reasons for absence are provided:

- **Asthma:** This is an illness they will have to manage for the rest of their life. If a student is struggling with asthma we 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 a student is struggling, we suggest a visit to their GP as they may need stronger prescribed medication than what is available at the supermarket.
- **Headache or feeling sick:** This is not a reason to stay off school. It is likely that they are dehydrated, so we would suggest a student drink plenty of water and has something to eat. They must be in school as they are not actually ill.
- **Temperature or fever:** This is also not a reason to be off school. We would encourage the family to ask the child take paracetamol to reduce the temperature. We may ask if their temperature has been taken using a thermometer, and to ring the doctors if 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.

Home visits

Mountain Rescue, the Behaviour and Attendance Team and the Safeguarding Team are most likely to complete home visits. 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 take a note of who else was present, their relationships with others in the house and the surroundings.



Attendance monitoring

Our Behaviour and Attendance Manager 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. This intervention may include texts, letters and / or attendance plans which begin with a meeting in school.

