

ATTENDANCE POLICY

April 2017

Responsibility: Anya Salisbury

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The staff of Dovers Green School is committed to developing a sound partnership with parents, pupils, governors and the Local Authority (LA) to build a school which serves the community, and of which it is proud. The school staff together with other local schools and the LA strongly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Children will be expected to aim for 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers that have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- discuss with their class teacher any problems preventing their child from attending school;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- contact the school by 9.15 a.m. on the first day of the child's absence;
- contact the school whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- try to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.
- notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.

We expect that school staff will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere and safe learning environment for the children;
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupil's, at least twice daily;
- monitor all pupil's attendance;
- try to contact parents on the first day when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received by 9.15 a.m. to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences so we know why a child has not been at school;
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils;
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, to express their concern and to clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- ask the Home School Link Worker to contact the family of a child with irregular attendance to express the school's concern and offer support if needed;
- meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality;

- refer on-going irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service.

Registration, Punctuality and Lateness

Arriving at school on time, every day, is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that pupil's learning and to that of the other pupils and therefore it is of paramount importance that all pupils arrive at school on time. The whistle goes at 8.45 a.m. and the school day begins at 8.50 a.m. when the attendance register is taken. If pupils arrive at school after the register has been taken, a late mark will be recorded. The register will close at 9.15 a.m. and if a child arrives after 9.15 a.m. without a valid explanation it will be recorded 'as late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.

In cases of persistent late arrival to school, the school office or Home School Link Worker will contact the parent and if there is still persistent late arrival, the Headteacher will send a letter to the parents and then request a meeting with them.

Encouraging Attendance

Dovers Green School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by promoting the importance of good attendance at the new parents' induction evening and in newsletters;
- informing parents that the school is aiming for a 96% or above attendance;
- by providing a caring and welcoming environment;
- by celebrating good and improved attendance eg cup for best class attendance each week; half termly, termly/yearly certificates for 100% attendance;
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive after the close of the register, the lateness will be recorded by the office staff;
- by monitoring pupils; informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance; arranging meetings with them if necessary; asking the Home School Link Worker to give guidance and support; and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note, e-mail or telephone call is received from the parent/carer the school will endeavour to contact them and continue to do so until communication is made.
- The school will invite any parent whose child has frequent or unexplained absence to meet with the Headteacher to discuss their child's school attendance. If attendance does not improve then the Headteacher will consult with the school's Education Welfare Officer.
- In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2016, all unexplained absences of 5 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason, as any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

- The Department of Education and the Local Authority monitor the levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools and in school the attendance of all pupils is tracked and monitored carefully.
- Parents will be informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance.

Request for Leave of Absence

The Governing Body delegate all decisions regarding leave of absence to the Headteacher who will consider all requests on a case by case basis. Any appeals will be heard by the Governing Body, whose decision will be final. If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an Application for Leave of Absence Form must, wherever possible, be completed prior to the leave date and preferably at least two weeks before.

This form can be obtained from the website or the School Office. Holidays taken without the permission of the Headteacher and the Governing Body may result in legal action being taken against each parent.

Holidays

The school term dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#).

Amendments to the regulations came into force on 1 September 2013 and 1 September 2016 and remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

- The standard penalty notice charge for unauthorised absence from school will be £60 per parent, per child, per day if paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days, the charge will be £120. Note these levels of charge are set centrally and not by the school. They are therefore subject to change and the applicable level of Penalty Notice charge existing at the time will be levied.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

- Education Welfare may issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a penalty notice is issued, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice.
- Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given.
- Unauthorised absences will be recorded if a child arrives at school after the close of registration on 5 occasions during a single half term. The lateness will be recorded in accordance with the 'Registration, Punctuality and Lateness' section of this policy, and the parent will be liable to receive a penalty notice.

Education Welfare Officer

- Education Welfare monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.
- If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to Education Welfare. The EWO will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, and unauthorised absence persists, the EWO can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution or consider an Education Supervision Order.
- Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result in conviction in a magistrate's court, with a fine not exceeding £2500, or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Dovers Green School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.