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# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

**Approval Date:** October 2021

**Review Date:** October 2022

## **Dovecotes Primary School**

### **Policy and Procedures for Pupil Attendance and Punctuality**

**Aim:** Our aim is to provide a framework which promotes and encourages regular and punctual attendance, in order that pupils may receive full entitlement provided at Dovecotes Primary School.

#### **Objectives:**

- To raise the overall school attendance to be at least in line with national targets and to improve attendance to above the national average.
- To reduce the number of persistent absentees.
- To promote a culture of punctuality and good attendance.
- To improve parental understanding of the school's expectations for attendance and punctuality.
- To work with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer), to improve pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To closely monitor attendance and punctuality;

#### **These will be achieved by:**

- Sharing this policy and procedures with parents/carers and the school's attendance target with pupils.
- Regular meetings with EWO (Education Welfare Officer), Attendance Officer and Head Teacher.
- Monitoring and reporting attendance and absenteeism through termly governor board meetings.
- Creating a reward system for good attendance and punctuality.
- Relevant staff receiving training as required.
- Seeking the views of all year groups through the School Council.

#### **Procedures for Attendance**

- All doors open at 8:45 am for staff to receive pupils into their classrooms.
- Doors close for pupils at 8:55 am when the register will be taken by the class teacher.
- Teachers close registers at 9:00 am.
- Pupils are marked present or absent. Absences that are marked 'N' will be completed by the attendance officer.
- Children attending appointments during the school day will need to be signed out at the school office using our electronic system and signed back in on return.

#### **Procedures for Punctuality**

- Pupils arriving after the school bell at 8.55am will need to enter school via our main reception.
- Pupils who arrive after 8.55a.m. must have an adult sign them in using our electronic system which will record how many minutes late. A reason for the lateness must be given.
- After 9.05a.m. the Attendance Officer will begin to update SIMs, the school's data tracking system.

- Monitoring of lateness will be undertaken by the Attendance Officer and Headteacher and recurring problems will lead to parents being invited into school to address the concern.

### **Procedures for Pupil Absence**

- It is the parents/carers responsibility to inform school of absence and, subsequently, reasons for absence.
- Parents/carers are required to contact school before 9:00am on each day of absence to confirm the reason for the absence and likely duration. Parents/ carers are able to report absence to school from 8:00am onwards.

NOTE: Parents and carers who regularly fail to contact the school will have all absences unauthorised and may be contacted by the Education Welfare Service.

- If a child is not in school and no reason for absence has been supplied parents/carers are contacted by the school's Attendance Officer via a phone call in the first instance to clarify the reason for absence.
- School will commence absence queries by telephone at 9:30am.
- If we do not receive a response to the phone call a text message is sent and if there is no response a home visit may be carried out by our school's Attendance Officer.
- The Attendance Officer reports to the Head teacher weekly to discuss attendance and late issues.
- The Attendance Officer and Headteacher meet weekly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to discuss any attendance issues which need to be taken to a more formal intervention.

### **Pupils Who Cause Concern**

- For parents/ carers of children whose attendance is identified as a cause for concern. Attendance will be monitored and targets for attendance will be set.
- Parents/ carers of pupils must provide medical evidence when their child returns to school.

Where pupil attendance is:

**Below 96% and is falling**, parents/carers will receive a letter stating current attendance and next required steps. This letter is posted and will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and EWO..

### **Below 90% Persistent Absence (PA)**

- School action is discussed in the weekly meeting involving the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- The School may also liaise with the School Nurse if absences are due to medical reasons.
- If there is no further improvement in attendance, an Early Help Assessment will be offered. This takes the form of a letter sent on behalf of the Headteacher by the Attendance Officer to arrange a meeting in school with EWO and parents/ carers.
- If the Early Help Assessment is refused or has no response, a DNA letter (did not attend) is sent to parents/ carers and if unauthorised absences continue; legal proceedings may take place.

The Headteacher will regularly update the governors with an overview of attendance and formally report to the governing body termly.

## Procedures for Monitoring and Promoting Attendance

Attendance is tracked by the Attendance Officer daily on the school's SIMS data tracking system and rewards are given as follows:

- The children who have 100% attendance each term will receive a certificate and a badge: Bronze for the Autumn term, Silver for maintaining 100% attendance throughout the Spring Term and Gold for maintaining 100% attendance throughout the Summer Term.
- The class that wins the overall class attendance at the end of each term will be given the opportunity to have a non-uniform day.
- The class that wins the overall class attendance at the end of the year will be given a treat afternoon with snacks along with a non-uniform day.
- Pupils who have achieved 100% at the end of July will receive a £5 note gift card and a pencil.
- Parents/ carers are kept informed about attendance through the school's website, pupil reports, parents' evening and the weekly attendance noticeboard which is kept in the school entrance area.

## Leave of Absence

The school follows the local authority procedures when parents and carers apply for leave of absence. All applications are assessed on a case by case basis.

### Application for Leave of Absence

- The Parent/ carer collects leave of absence form from school reception.
- The Parent/ carer returns completed application form at least four weeks before the date of absence.
- The Attendance Officer forwards the application form to the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher applies approval criteria.
- The Application is forwarded to the Attendance Officer who informs parent/ carer of the outcome by appropriate letter.
- Applications are processed within seven working days.
- Leave of absence requests for children under 5 years of age will be approved as children are of non-statutory age.

Leave of absence that is approved = authorised absence.

Leave of absence that is not approved = unauthorised absence.

The Head teacher and governing body approve leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances such as bereavement, serious illness, and significant events such as a family wedding or cultural/religious reasons. **As decided by the governors of the school, the Headteacher, apart from highly exceptional cases, can only authorise up to 5 days leave of absence in an academic year. Any further leave of absence in that academic year will not be authorised.**

**If any further leave of absence exceeds 5 days in succession the school will contact the Education Welfare Service who may serve a penalty notice.**

## Exceptional Circumstances

The government and schools realise that it is more expensive to go on holiday during the school holiday period than at other times of the year. However, it is the view of the DfE that a child should

be in school for the 39 weeks of the academic year and that holidays in term time, in whatever form, are not considered to be 'exceptional' circumstances.

### **Holidays are not a good enough reason for taking a child or young person out of school.**

Absence from school under exceptional circumstances is slightly different from taking a holiday in term time. In deciding whether or not to grant a leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances', the following is considered:

- What is the normal pattern of attendance for the child(ren) whose parent/ carer is asking for a leave of absence.
- What is 'exceptional' for one family might be the norm for another family.

If the request for leave of absence is not approved by the Headteacher but the parent/carer takes their child away, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the Head teacher may refer the matter on to the Education Welfare Service. The parent/carer is then at risk of receiving a £60.00 fixed penalty notice per child per parent.

### **Non- Return from Leave of Absence**

It may occur that a child does not return within the stated period of leave of absence. Initially, normal school absence procedure are followed.

If the child has not returned within five days, after the stated period of leave of absence, the following procedure is followed:

- Case referred to the EWO by the Education Welfare Officer.
- Home visit is carried out by the Attendance Officer and/ or the Headteacher.
- Letter is sent by post to parent/ carers by the Attendance Officer on behalf of the Head teacher.

### **Children Missing from Education**

Guidance has been issued by the Department of Education (DfE) for Children Missing from Education (Sept 2016)

If at any point there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

### **Monitoring the Policy for Attendance and Punctuality**

This policy will be reviewed formally every three years or as guidelines change or are reviewed.