



Daven Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Daven Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and LAB members at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. **A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. A child who is 10 minutes late each day, misses 5 hours of learning in a 6 week half term.**

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Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, LAB members and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality, through careful and regular monitoring of attendance.
- Achieve between **95.6 and 95.8%** attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Report authorised and unauthorised absence to parents on the child's end of year report.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.
- Report on attendance to LAB members annually.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and LAB members on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

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Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the headteacher (or their delegated authority) can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes – using Arbor ‘take register’ at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness, if parents/carers have not communicated with the school, through first day absence telephone calls.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence, through holidays taken during term time and also other unauthorised absences, through the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To work effectively with the school Attendance Consultant and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently and refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve
- To report appropriate attendance statistics to East Cheshire LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

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Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Taking the register, using Arbor, twice a day and ensuring that the register is accurate.
- Staff will mark a child as present if they are in the classroom before the register closes.
- If a child is absent, without prior notification, staff will mark a child as absent using 'N'. If a reason has been given, then the appropriate code should be used (see appendix 1) and a comment should be added, using the 'comment' facility*.
- In the event of a Arbor failure, the class teacher should use a pre-prepared class list, which is kept in the plastic register wallets, and manually take the register.
- Maintaining the security of their Arbor log in and not using a log in belonging to another member of staff.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing the Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at parent – teacher consultation evenings where necessary.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

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Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Checking that the morning and afternoon registers have been completed and printing copies for use in the event of an evacuation, and for archiving.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence and recording these on Arbor, using the comments facility*, within 30 minutes of receiving the message.
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed at the point of contact and that this information is transferred to Arbor, using the minutes late / comments facility*, within 30 minutes of receiving the information.
- Contacting parents of absent children by 9.30am, where no contact has been made by the parents, and recording this on Arbor using the comments facility*.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home, using SIMS comments facilities*, at the point at which they arrive or leave.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence by 9.30am.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. **For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter) Please refer to the Medical Absence section of this Policy**
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

All the school doors open at 8.45am until 9am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00 am and by 1.20pm. (Attendance code / and \ (for pupils who are present).

All attendance records are documented using Arbor's software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and they must not be changed after registration period, except by a member of the admin team or through a direct instruction issued by a member of the leadership team via the official registration error slips.

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Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9.00am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school after the register has closed will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.20 will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a medical appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning and often feel uncomfortable walking in to a lesson or assembly which has already started.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

First Day Contact

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. Being 'poorly' is not a reason for absence; precise details need to be given.

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will make a phone call to the parents before 9.30am then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O). It is the parents responsibility to keep the school informed of the most up to date emergency contact numbers for their child.

ABSENCES

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

MEDICAL ABSENCES

Any medical absences in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. This does not have to be a doctor's note but can be prescriptions, medication, or appointment cards. If no medical evidence is received then the absence will be coded as unauthorised.

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UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE – FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

Parents/carers should be aware that Daven Primary School may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

DfE

At Daven Primary School the following have been determined to be **exceptional** circumstances:

1. Being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of learning time.
2. Service personnel returning from / scheduled to embark on a tour of duty abroad.
3. The wedding or funeral of a parent.
4. Other circumstances, which may arise, can be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher, in consultation with LAB members.

When the Headteacher is considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors will help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate

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- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.

School will not consider the following to be exceptional circumstances:

- the availability of cheap holidays
- the availability of the desired accommodation
- adverse weather during the school holiday period
- an overlap at the beginning or end of the school term

Penalty Notice Holiday Fine

If parents/carers take their children on holiday during term time and this is not authorised by the School, they can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (Holiday Fine) of £60 (if paid in 21 days) or £120 (if paid between 21 and 28 days). Each parent/carer can be issued with a notice one per family. If the fines remain unpaid and the child's attendance does not improve the parent/carer may be taken to court to be prosecuted under the higher charge of an 'aggravated offence'.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of between 95.6 and 95.8%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EWS from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

School work closely with the Attendance Consultant who visits the school regularly to monitor attendance. They liaise with school in identifying children with low attendance below 96%. They

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work with the school to improve attendance and may advise school to contact the Local Authority Education Welfare Service to request a Fixed Penalty fine if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

Reporting Attendance

Our office staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor's attendance software and reported accordingly. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

- The annual return is completed for the Department for Education in May.
- An attendance report is included in every child's end of year report.
- Schools must now report to the LA any child who has had over 10 session (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence in a given period who have taken unauthorised absence in term time (coded as G in the register)

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Appendix 1

Arbor Codes

| Code | Meaning |
|------|--|
| / | Present am |
| \ | Present pm |
| B | Educated off site (not dual registered) |
| C | Other authorised circumstances |
| D | Dual registration (off site) |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) |
| G | Family holiday not agreed or in excess of day agreed |
| H | Family holiday agreed |
| I | Illness |
| J | Interview |
| L | Late (after 9.05) |
| M | Medical appointment |
| N | No reason provided for absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes) |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| R | Religious observance |
| S | Study leave |
| T | Traveller absence |
| U | Late (after 9.20) |
| V | Educational visit or trip |
| W | Work experience |
| X | DFE School closure to pupils |
| Y | Enforced closure |

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