



# Attendance Policy

All children and young people of compulsory school age are entitled by law, regardless of ability, race, culture or gender, to a suitable education according to their needs. For most children and young people this is best achieved through regular attendance at school (Appendix A).

## **Mission Statement**

Denham Village Infant School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her potential. The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued and secure. All school staff work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Denham Village Infant School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## **Aims**

- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality, meeting and exceeding the school target of 95% and therefore giving children the best possible advantage to learning.
- To keep levels of unauthorised absence to a minimum.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils in partnership with the Education Welfare Service.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.



## School Procedures

### Registers

The Register is marked at 8:55a.m each morning and at the beginning of the afternoon session at 1.15p.m. Morning registration closes at 9.15 a.m. and the afternoon at 1.30 p.m. Children arriving after these times are marked as late after registers closed. Their absence will be recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### Lateness

Any pupil arriving after 9:05am or 1:25pm will be marked as having a late mark (minutes late will be recorded) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed, sickness. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close. Children arriving late should report to the school office to ensure that they are registered in the late book for reference in the event of an emergency.

Parents of children who have **more than 5** late marks in the space of one half term will receive a letter informing them of the number of late arrivals and they will then be monitored for a further half term with the expectation that this number will improve. Should the number of late arrivals not be reduced, they will be asked in for a meeting to discuss the persistent lateness. If no further improvement is made a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

### Absence

On a child's first day of absence parents are expected to contact the school. If there has been no contact by 9.30am the administrative staff in school will make telephone contact. The reason for the absence will be passed to the class teacher.

If a child continues to be away and there has been no contact from the parent/carer the school will telephone. Parents will be asked how long the absence is expected to continue.

If school is unable to contact a parent or named contacts after 24 hours, the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) will be informed

If any pupil is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days the absence will be notified to the Local Authority by contacting the Education Welfare Service. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

### Absence notes

Notes from parents/carers should be sent via the register to the school office so the school receptionist can make the appropriate entry on the register, date and place in the absence

files for each individual class, which are kept in the school office for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. Telephone messages will be registered on the daily registers, kept in the school office.

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the school administrative staff to be aware of and bring to the attention of the Headteacher, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/carer. If this is unsuccessful the school will seek advice from the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

### **Requesting Leave of Absence and Holidays in term time**

Holidays during term time are discouraged and therefore leave of absence is not granted in term time. Parents should be aware of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

### **Referral for Penalty Notices**

If a pupil is taken out of school during term time for an unauthorised period of 5 consecutive days or more, the school can choose to refer the matter to the Local Authority who can issue a Penalty Notice. On child's return to school, a referral form will be completed and sent to the EWO with a copy of the registration certificate and the letter of reply to the application for leave and EWO will manage the case from that point. Should parents not apply in advance for their leave, the same process will apply. Should the school have good reason to believe that a child was on holiday but school have not been informed or a false reason has been given, the same procedure of referral will apply.

Penalty notices are currently £60 per parent per child per absence period if paid within 21 days of issue or £120 per parent per child per absence period if paid between 21 and 28 days. If not paid within 28 days the EWO will begin legal proceedings.

### **Encouraging Good Attendance**

At Denham Village Infant School we have established an effective system for incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and time keeping. We challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. The school uses a variety of strategies to promote good attendance.

- Provide leaflets to parents promoting good attendance
- Letters highlighting attendance and on-going improvements
- Raising the profile of attendance through parents' evenings, newsletters and individual letters to parents
- Using reward systems for good or improved attendance such as certificates or stickers

### **Teachers will:**

- Stress that attendance and punctuality are important
- Monitor patterns of attendance and speak to the Headteacher about any concerns
- Praise improved attendance/punctuality

### **Administrative staff will:**

- Print out weekly attendance figures and pass them to the Headteacher
- Add reasons for absence during the morning session (should they receive information re: absence)
- Monitor patterns of attendance and lateness weekly
- Chase any unaccounted absences
- Inform the Headteacher of any concerns regarding attendance
- Print parent letters as required.

### **Headteacher will:**

- Stress that attendance and punctuality are important through newsletters, letters and assemblies
- Monitor patterns of attendance
- Praise attendance/punctuality
- Monitor all those pupils whose attendance falls below 90% and send out individual letters to parents
- Make referrals to EWO (Education Welfare Officer) when concerned about an individual's attendance
- Complete and send off the required data returns concerning attendance

### **Parents/carers will:**

- In law, parents/carers have the prime responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly
- Keep requests for their child to be absent from school to a minimum
- Inform school if their child cannot attend for any reason by calling the school office on the first day of absence by 9.30am.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed and ready to learn
- Ensure that all medical appointments are made outside the school hours if possible

### **Involvement with Education Welfare Service**

Denham Village infant School has established an effective system of communication with pupils, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide information, advice and support. Children's attendance should be monitored by the class teacher and the receptionist who deals with attendance. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher. The Head will liaise with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) if there is a cause for concern. The EWO should be informed if any child is absent for 10 consecutive days without a legally, accepted explanation for absence. The child's name will be placed on the Out of School

Database. Referral to the EWO may also be made if the child's attendance falls below 90%. A letter highlighting an attendance concern will be sent to parents prior to a referral.

## **The Registration System and Absence Codes**

The school uses manual paper registers and a computerised system for maintaining the school attendance records. National codes are used to record attendance information

## **Appendix A**

### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall ensure that they receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- [a] to his/her age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] to any special needs he/she may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or through other arrangements. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

LAs have a duty to satisfy themselves that children who are not in the school system are receiving a suitable education. If the LA believes that a child is not getting a suitable education, it has a duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to serve a notice or a School Attendance Order on a parent. The notice requires the parent to satisfy the LA that the child is receiving a suitable education whilst the order requires the parent to register the child at a named school.

LAs also have responsibility under sections 444, 444A and 444ZA of the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school. This duty is often exercised through the Education Welfare Service and its Education Welfare Officers (EWOs), also known as Education Social Workers. They also have the following legal powers to enforce attendance:

- School Attendance Orders (SAOs);
- Prosecution for irregular attendance;
- Penalty Notices for irregular attendance; and
- Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping. The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

## Appendix

### Travellers

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Buckinghamshire, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

Denham Village Infant School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at Denham Village Infant School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Denham Village Infant School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen.
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

Denham Village Infant School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time-evidenced.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

## Intervention Flow Chart

School will notify parent of the child's irregular school attendance and offer them the opportunity and support to improve.

If you receive a letter informing you of concerns regarding your child's attendance you should

- Speak with your child to see if there are any reasons why they are reluctant to attend
- Contact the school to discuss any difficulties you or your child may be experiencing.
  - Ensure your child attends school regularly

If there is no improvement and the parent has not provided a good reason for the absence, the school will refer to the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service will invite you to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a Warning of a Penalty Notice.

A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between yourself and the Local Authority aimed at supporting you in improving your child's school attendance.

Whilst your involvement in a Parenting Contract is voluntary, if you fail to engage with the support offered and your child's attendance remains irregular the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice or begin legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

If you are issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 this must be paid in full within 28 days otherwise the Penalty will increase to £120. If you fail to pay the Penalty the Education Welfare Service may instigate legal proceedings against you.

If you are found guilty of this offence you can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.