



Dove Bank Primary School

Attendance Policy December 2018

'Do Our Very best in Every way' is our School motto; in order for every child to achieve their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential.

At Dove Bank Primary School we believe promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Within School we promote good attendance through creative approaches to the curriculum. This includes topics of high pupil interest and choice, supported by a wide range of learning resources.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure all pupils take full advantage of opportunities for learning in school
- ✓ To ensure the well-being and safety of children at Dove Bank Primary School
- ✓ To set school targets for attendance
- ✓ To monitor pupil absence and challenge non-attendance

Intentions

- ✓ To actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all pupils
- ✓ Every term the best attending class in Key Stage 2 and Reception/Key Stage 1 will be celebrated in assembly
- ✓ To celebrate at the end of every term 100% attendance - individual pupils
- ✓ To celebrate full year attendance - individual pupils - end of Summer Term
- ✓ To monitor regular or extended absence and take steps to resolve this
- ✓ To work with EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) to ensure no child is absent without school being aware of the reason
- ✓ To ensure that discretionary power to grant leave is only used in exceptional circumstances
- ✓ To use the School Information Management System to analyse and monitor pupils' patterns of absence and work with parents to rectify patterns

Teaching and Learning Impact

Dove Bank Primary School will endeavour to reduce the disruption to children's learning through unnecessary absence and will work with families towards avoiding lateness or avoidable time off from school.

Equality and Inclusion

All children will be dealt with in the same manner. Allowances within this policy will be made for children with severe disabilities or illnesses who require additional time off for administration or medication.

Safeguarding

If a child is absent for any reason unknown to the school, Parents or Carers must contact the school office in some way before 9.30 am on the first day of absence and every subsequent day of absence thereafter.

If no information or a phone call is received on your child's first day of absence, school will make contact to ensure the child is safe and their absence is genuine.

Registration of pupils

- ✓ Dove Bank Primary School will ensure that staff are aware of any new legislation with pupil registration
- ✓ Registers are to be completed accurately at the beginning of every session i.e. morning and afternoon
- ✓ Parents to be aware of importance of contacting school to report absence before 9.30am
- ✓ Senior Managers and School Governors to ensure evaluation of attendance procedures
- ✓ Regular reports will be provided for the Governing Body of Dove Bank Primary School
- ✓ All absences will be reported by the Head teacher to the Educational Welfare Officer on their half termly visit.

Contents of the Attendance Register

Each class teacher will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. On each occasion they will record whether every pupil is present or absent.

The school will follow up any absences to:

1. Ascertain the reason;
2. Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
3. Identify whether the absence is authorised or not; and,
4. Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Registration and Absence Procedures

All absences will be recorded on school registers using the national codes as follow: Pupils present will be denoted by an oblique stroke (/). Absence will be denoted by a circle. Authorised absence will be recorded by the addition of the appropriate absence code for example, I (ill), H (holiday) or M (medical). Unauthorised absences will be denoted by an empty circle. Any pupil who is on role but not present in school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence - This is for pupils where no reason has been given or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This can occur if a child arrives after 9:30am.
2. Authorised Absence - This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.
3. Approved Educational Activity (code V) - This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

If your child is late arriving at school always report to the school office and make sure your child is signed into our late arrival book by an adult (after 8.55am) If they arrive after 8.55am they will receive an 'L' mark in the register accompanied by the number of minutes late the child was. If the child arrives after registers have closed (after 9:15am) they will receive a 'U' code; accompanied with the number of minutes late the child was. A record of late minutes is kept for individual children and the same procedure for absence is followed if lateness is a concern.

The Education Welfare Officers hold 'late gates'; issue notices to parents/carers who arrive to school late. This is done on a half termly, or termly basis (dependent on availability of EWO)

Reporting Absences

It is a parent's responsibility to inform school of any reasons for a child's absence, before 9.30 am each day that they are absent from school (unless otherwise arranged with school) and to provide further information as required. This should be followed by a letter of confirmation, on the child's return to school. We will send a letter requesting information if an explanation has not been received. We will refer the matter to the school's EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) if no response is forthcoming.

If no information or a phone call is received on your child's first day of absence, school will make contact with you to ensure your child is safe and that their absence is genuine. Further contact will be made on every subsequent day of absence.

What should parents do if they wish to request a leave of absence?

Parents should write a letter to the Head teacher and Chair of Governors requesting a leave of absence. This must include details and reasons why you wish to take leave during term time. We would strongly recommend that this is done before planning/booking flights, hotels etc . The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors will also take into account your child's current attendance and attainment / progress data when making their decision.

Please Note: Governors will not authorise any requests for leave of absence for children taking end of Key Stage Assessments (Years 2 and 6) during the Spring and Summer Terms.

What happens if a child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from the school?

The absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per parent per child being issued by the Local Authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

If we have not received any information regarding a child's absence and have reason to believe they have been on holiday, we will contact parents / guardians to advise that the Local Authority will be informed and they may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

Please Note: Governors will not authorise any requests for leave of absence for children taking end of Key Stage Assessments (Years 2 and 6) during the Spring and Summer Terms.

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

- From 1 January 2018 any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine.
- Even where attendance levels are high Penalty Notices may still be issued.
- More than one Penalty Notice could be issued for repeated absence without permission during term time.

Penalty Notice for persistent absence

- If your child has accumulated 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times (has received a 'U' code in the register) over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

Penalty Notice for persistent absence and lateness

- If a child accumulates 10 unauthorised late marks, a penalty notice will be issued. To note the late marks do not have to be immediately one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged to ensure your child attends school on time. If your child is late you must inform school of the reason(s) why, as we may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Mis-reporting 'Sick Leave'

Where strong evidence exists that the reporting of 'sick leave' is not genuine, Fixed Penalty Notice procedures will be imposed.

Evidence could include:

- Social Media
- Non-contact with School
- School are unable to contact Parents/Carers
- Children returning to school with a 'suntan'
- Children reporting a holiday, either before or on returning to school
- Children reporting non-illness

Medical Appointments

Parents of children attending a medical appointment during the school day need to produce an appointment card/letter or similar paperwork prior to the appointment.

Where possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of the school day.

We can then confirm lateness as a 'medical' absence and therefore authorised.

Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is overseen by Mrs. Childs; school Administrator. Mrs. Childs maintains a record of children's attendance rates and reasons for absence. Mrs. Childs meets weekly with the Head teacher to hand over all figures for the week. Children causing concerns are also identified at this point and appropriate procedures, as outlined in the policy are followed. In addition to 'in-house' procedures Dove Bank Primary School works closely with the Local Support Team to discuss individual cases and decide on appropriate next steps; hold 'late-gates', look at whole-school improvements or concerns relating to attendance statistics.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy will automatically update to include any changes in procedures or regulation as published by Staffordshire County Council.

This policy links to:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>

Due for Review: December 2019 or earlier if necessary

SignedChair of Governors

APPENDIX

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

UPDATE

December 2018

Please read this information carefully as it tells you how much you may have to pay if you receive a Penalty Notice.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a possible Penalty Notice.

In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria are met:

- 20 sessions (10 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during the last 3 terms - regardless of academic year. These absences **do not need to be consecutive days**.
- Unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 school days) due to a leave of absence (including holiday) in term time and not agreed by the Headteacher.
- Persistent late arrival at school

Who May Issue a Penalty Notice?

- Local Authority - Local Support Team (Education Welfare Officer)
- Headteacher can request the Local Support Team to issue a penalty notice.
- A Police officer may request a Local Support Team to issue a penalty notice.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

- Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 per child and per Parent or legal Guardian. (A family with 2 children could therefore be issued a Penalty Notice for £240)
- Payment of a Penalty Notice after 21 days but within 28 days is £120 per child and per Parent or legal Guardian. (A family with 2 children could therefore be issued a Penalty Notice for £480)
- Please note the County Council retains all revenue from Penalty Notices to cover collection or prosecution costs in the event of non-payment - the school do not receive ANY money
- Payment will not be accepted in part or by instalments

Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Penalty Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996.

WHY 95% OR HIGHER ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Attendance remains HIGH on the Government's agenda and is strictly monitored by the Local Authority. Below are some reasons why:

- Research shows children who achieve consistently 95% or above attendance go on to be high achievers in Secondary School - this has a direct impact on their future life opportunities!
- When attendance drops below 90% children struggle to catch up
- If a child were to miss 6 school days every term - this would be equivalent to missing ONE whole year of school
- Fixed penalty notices of £60 are currently being issued within this Local Authority, rising to £120 if payment is not made within 21 days but is made before 28 days.
- Children who are regularly absent are in danger of:
 - Becoming reluctant learners
 - Losing self confidence
 - Lower self esteem
 - Missing out on friendship groups

Please support us and together we can ensure ALL our children are the very best they can be; today, tomorrow and in the future.

**Please read the following statement
IT MAY AFFECT YOUR FUTURE HOLIDAY PLANS**

From the Department of Education April 2013

'...Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'.

Please note this includes requests for HOLIDAY leave. Governors have agreed requests for leave of absence, to include holidays, will NOT be authorised with immediate effect.

Exceptional Circumstances will be considered by the Chair of Governors on an individual basis. Please note Holiday Leave does not qualify for exceptional circumstances.

All requests must be made in writing and addressed to the Chair of Governors.



Attendance at School - What the Percentages indicate

95% - 100%

WELL DONE! THIS IS EXCELLENT

If you are in the green group you have been absent for less than two weeks in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.

92% - 94%

BE CAREFUL

If you are in the yellow group you could be missing up to 2 weeks of learning in the whole year.

85% - 91%

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED!

If you are in the grey group you could be missing at least 4 weeks of learning in the school year.

Less than 85%

PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 6 weeks of learning in the school year.