



# Dove Bank Primary School

## Attendance Policy January 2020

*'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 attached (Appendix 1). 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** - This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken offsite 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 8.50am) If they arrive after registers have closed (after 9:30am) they will receive a late mark in the register; 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.

## **Requests for 'Leave of Absence' during Term Time**

Since September 2013 the Head teacher may only authorise leave for 'exceptional' circumstances.

Head teachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an 'exceptional' circumstance.

### **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.

### **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.

### **What are Exceptional Circumstances?**

- Wedding & Funerals (immediate family only - 1 day) Please note there are no exceptions for Weddings/Funerals abroad

**Other circumstances will be considered, judgements will be made on individual requests.**

**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 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 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 Porter; school Administrator. Mrs. Porter maintains a record of children's attendance rates and reasons for absence. Mrs. Porter 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: Spring 2022 or earlier if necessary.**

Signed .....Chair of Governors