

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their potential. The attendance of all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of class incentives to promote good attendance and punctuality.

We encourage children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- Attainment in school
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governors and the Headteacher, in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

### **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk. The school shares the attendance percentage with parents at each parent consultation meeting and more frequently where there are concerns.

***It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent and each day thereafter.***

***This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that your child is safe.***

Pupils are expected to arrive in good time for 8.50am as this is when they will go into class. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where they are registered, their meal requirements noted and the reason for lateness is recorded.

### **Illness and Medical Appointments**

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the school office will record the absence in the register. As part of our



Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) An appointment card, copy of prescription or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required.
- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- d) If your child is absent due to continuous vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not return to school for **the next 48 hours** after the last bout of sickness or loose bowel movement. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
- e) For more than three days of absence the school may require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- f) Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days, or if previously requested in a letter (Amber Level 2 concern or by Attendance Improvement officer (following EWO) request).

## **THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL STAFF**

**The Leadership team has overall responsibility for attendance.**

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored weekly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

### **Attendance Officers:**

Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead:	Ms C Redwood
Attendance Administration:	Mrs C Joint
Family Liaison Officer:	Mrs E Walker
Governor with responsibility for Attendance:	Mr J Godfrey

**It is the responsibility of the school attendance team to ensure:**

Attendance and lateness records are up to date. If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence and a reason obtained. Where it is not possible to make contact, as a duty of care, we will instruct a member of our safeguarding team to undertake a welfare check which will involve a visit to your home.

## Action for Attendance

### **100% Excellent** – Well done!

This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

**96.2% to 99.9% Good** – This attendance is in line with our school target of 96.2%

**96.1% to 90% Poor** – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School sends out Green Level 1 concern letters at 93% to make parents aware of drop in attendance and hope to see an improvement. School may contact parent directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance.

**Below 90%** is deemed as Persistent Absence and is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Amber Level 2 concern letters will be sent home and Early Help will be offered to the family. Sometimes, further evidence for absence may be requested e.g. appointment cards. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement may be called. If improvement is not achieved, a referral is made to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO formally EWO) who will meet with the family and Headteacher to discuss further actions.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different, and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
- b) Prior to the engagement of the AIO, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for AIO involvement.

## Children Missing Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Headteacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school or **Devon County Council** that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the local authority Devon Education Welfare Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

## Lateness

The class register is taken at the beginning of the day at 8.50am and at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). Our School Register is closed at 09.00am and if your child arrives after this time they will be recorded as late up until 09.15am



or given an unauthorised absence thereafter. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') This national code counts as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at open evenings and may be referred to the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and/or the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO). Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Lateness affects children in a variety of ways:

- They feel embarrassed or upset about coming into a classroom once the session has begun.
- They miss out on learning.
- They don't feel included in the daily routine from the start and this affects confidence and well-being.

### **Definitions**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

#### **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 writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

#### **UNAUTHORISED Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given. This includes: □ Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.

- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Holidays not agreed.

### **Authorising Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school. The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that **will not be authorised**:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness [alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school – emergencies excepted]
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip

### **Attendance and Lateness**

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held and targets for attendance will be set.

For all children, the school monitors absence and lateness and has a stepped approach to taking action. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and consider each case carefully.

- Discussion with Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness; Family Liaison Worker support as appropriate.
- Request from school for parent/carer to meet with school staff.
- Initiate the process, if appropriate, to access support from other agencies.
- Referral to Attendance Improvement Officer

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes is shared.

### **Local Authority Action**

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there are at least 10 sessions (5days) absence in a term the school must consider the following:

### **Attendance Improvement Officer**

This may include:

- Home visits
- Multi agency meetings



- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast track to attendance

### **Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance**

Penalty Notices are issued by the Devon Education Welfare Service in accordance with their Code of Conduct.

### **Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:**

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent, of each child **or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.**

**As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.**

Please follow this link through to **Devon's Absence from school – penalty notices**

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/schoolattendance/absence-from-school-penalty-notices>

### **Leave of Absence/Holiday Absence**

At the beginning of each school year a letter is sent to parents advising them of the government legislation surrounding holidays and avoidable absence from school.

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised.

Schools have the discretion, in exceptional circumstances to authorise leave absence:

- For service personnel i.e. having returned from a long tour of duty
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead, **MUST** be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date.

Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached on behalf of the Governing Board (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits in line with the criteria outlined above. The decision is final, and once the decision to not authorise the leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.



If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the EWO who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Holiday Absence**

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Devon Education Welfare Service Code of Conduct.

- The Devon Education Welfare Service is notified that a request for a term time holiday is not authorised.
- The legal proceedings officer employed by the Council and based within the Education Welfare Office will issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child). Please see link for Devon's legal intervention  
[https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/sites/PublicDocs/Education/\\_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?questaccesstoken=pt8uD7CplnbpfuV%2bWgmlysyoi30z1oRIhQj3NHtK8Cc%3d&docid=09800fb82e7e74bd99e8c334d730b37c6](https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/sites/PublicDocs/Education/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?questaccesstoken=pt8uD7CplnbpfuV%2bWgmlysyoi30z1oRIhQj3NHtK8Cc%3d&docid=09800fb82e7e74bd99e8c334d730b37c6)

### **Rewards for Positive Attendance**

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

It is important to acknowledge that some children will not achieve 100% attendance due to necessary, important medical appointments or procedures. In order to support these children with medical conditions and ensure they do not feel discriminated against or be unable to obtain attendance rewards, we celebrate class attendance with the Attendance Trees. Each week a leaf is attached to each class tree. The colour of the leaf depends on the level of weekly attendance, Gold for over 98%, Silver for 97% - 97.9%, Bronze for 96% - 96.9% and Green for under 96%. At the end of each term all the pupils from the class tree with the most Gold leaves has a treat in school e.g. extra playtime.

### **Individual Recognition**

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made.

It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.



### **Equality Statement**

'Equality and cohesion will be promoted, in line with our Equality and Cohesion Policy, and this policy will be operated in a non-discriminatory way'

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed according to the schedule for policy review.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: July 2022

Chair of Governors

### **Appendices**





### Daily Attendance Procedure

Pupil absent from school

□

Parent /Carer phones office (answering machine available at all times)

□

Morning Sessions

Registration opens at 8.50am and closes at 9.00am

□

Pupils arriving late (after 8.50am) sign in at office and report reason for lateness

Register marked by Teacher / present or marked with an 'N' code for absent pupils

□

Registers to be completed on SIMs by 9.00am

Attendance Administrator to update register with reasons for absence. (L) registration will be marked as late between 9.00 and 9.15am / and will be marked as (U) late after registration after 9.15am

□

Office contacts everyone who is absent without a valid reason – via schoolcomms text message or phone

Basic details of outcome to be noted on SIMs (comments).

Further more detailed information to be recorded in comments on SIMs and brought to attention of Head Teacher and SLT via CPOMs.

*If the school is unable to make any contact with the family by 12pm and there is no reason recorded for the absence, a welfare check may be undertaken by members of the school pastoral and safeguarding team.*

□

Further action required that day to be determined by Head Teacher and SLT (Persistent Absence Action Plan to be in place for every pupil with less than **90%** attendance or sessions as directed by EWO)

□

Appropriate coding for that absence to be notified to Attendance Administrator (when known)



□

**Afternoon Sessions**

Key Stage 1 – registration of pupils at 1.05pm, registers completed by 1.15pm

Key Stage 2 – registration of pupils at 1.30pm, registers completed by 1.40pm.

**Appendix 1****S2****A request by a parent, that a future absence/period of absence be authorised by school/college/academy**

Schools are only allowed by law, to authorise non-medical absences if requested in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides. A school can only authorise such a request if they are satisfied that there are “exceptional circumstances” which apply. However, even if there are exceptional circumstances, schools can still consider any other relevant factors such as previous attendance rates; the ability of the pupil to catch-up on missed work; the wider impact of missing the specified period of time.

Devon County Council’s advice is that schools must be extremely cautious about approving such requests if the pupil’s education is likely to be significantly impacted upon.

**ATTENDANCE**



**POLICY**

*To be completed by a parent with whom the child(ren) lives.*

Child's name: ..... Class/Year Group: .....

Child's name: ..... Class/Year Group: .....

Full name(s) of all parents going away with the child(ren) listed above:

Parent 1: .....

Parent 2: .....

Period Absent: **From** ..... **To**.....

Number of school days that will be missed: .....

ATTENDANCE



POLICY

Please explain the reason for the absence (consider that the school will use this to determine whether the “exceptional circumstances” criteria is met. July 2022

You are asked to sign this request to confirm that the information provided above is correct,

Parents should ensure that they know whether the absence will be authorised or not before they go away as an unauthorised absence will likely result in a penalty notice or court summons being issued to each parent for each pupil affected. It is therefore recommended that this completed form is sent into the school **at least three school weeks** before the intended absence.

and that you have read the warning contained in the Additional Information overleaf.

***For school use. To be completed by a member of staff so authorised Date***

**form received in school: .....**

**Pupils current attendance rate: .....%**

**Number of unauthorised absences in last 6 months: .....**

**Absence authorised – the school authorises the above absence as requested, satisfied that exception circumstances apply to this specific request.**

**Absence unauthorised – the school is unable to authorise the absences specified overleaf.**

If request is unauthorised, the main reason(s) are: (please tick all/any that apply)

Circumstances not deemed to be exceptional  Current attendance rate is low

The period covered by this request (length) is high  Number of unauthorised absences is high

The time of the school year  Other (please specify)

.....  
.....  
.....

Date parent notified of school decision: .....

Signed (member of staff making determination): ..... Designation:.....

If this request is unauthorised by the school, a penalty notice may be issued by Devon County Council. A penalty notice offers a parent the opportunity of dealing with a potential offence without going to court, by paying a penalty. If parents can't afford to pay, or for any other reason do not take the offer of paying the notice within a set time, then the case will proceed to a magistrates court. The provision of penalty notices is set by Regulations and the amount of the penalty, timeframe for payment or payment method are not able to be varied by Devon County Council.

**Parents should note that only one penalty notice per parent per child will normally be issued within a two year period.** Any second 'offence' within a two year period will be referred straight to court.