



Primary Pupil Attendance Policy

Policy Owner: Angela Winch

Policy Date: March 2018

School: Drapers' Brookside Infant and Junior School

Introduction

Attendance and punctuality is a key priority for all those associated with the Drapers Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). This policy and accompanying procedures set out the expectations and requirements for pupils, the various roles and responsibilities associated with these requirements and the steps that will be taken where poor attendance and punctuality are identified.

Our schools will meet their obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring that our schools have a welcoming environment
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We will also support parents of children under compulsory school age to establish a culture of good attendance from the outset.

We believe that:

- Pupils learn best when they are in school, on time, every day
- Good attendance helps children to make friends and to feel happy
- Good habits and regular routines help pupils to succeed
- They also prepare them for later life

We keep a record of attendance so that we know how well each school and its pupils are doing. We must record reasons for absence; it is our legal duty. The government describes a child who misses more than one day in every ten as 'persistently absent'.

Scope

This policy applies to all directors, governors, staff and pupils of the Drapers' Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). It also applies to parents and carers of pupils at schools within the MAT, who formally confirm that they will abide by our policies when their children join our schools.

Each school within the MAT must ensure that the contents of this policy are communicated to all staff. This communication must be evidenced in writing and refreshed on an annual basis. All parents must formally accept this policy when their children join a MAT school and this acceptance must be evidenced in writing through the Home-School Agreement. Each school within the MAT must publish this policy on its website.

Policy

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is present at school during all school days, and between the hours specified for attendance, unless there is a valid medical reason for their child's absence.

The Principal has responsibility for ensuring that this requirement is adhered to and must establish procedures to record, report and resolve unauthorised absence and lack of punctuality. This must include the appointment of an Attendance Officer (AO) who has responsibility for the operation of the procedures and the tracking and monitoring. The AO must monitor overall attendance, collate and report on attendance information, and ensure that staff receive appropriate training in the requirements of this policy.

The AO is directly responsible for ensuring that the use of all attendance codes complies with the reporting requirements of the Department for Education, particularly as they relate to absence. The AO must review and sign attendance reports on a monthly basis to confirm that they are an accurate reflection of the actual performance of the school.

Procedures

1. Attendance Register

1.1 By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

1.2 The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

1.3 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

1.4 Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

2. Unplanned Absence

2.1 Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.40 a.m. or as soon as practically possible. Parents should inform the school of the unplanned absence either by telephone, by email or in person.

2.2 Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

2.3 If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3 Medical or Dental Appointments

3.1 Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

3.2 We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

4 Lateness and Punctuality

4.1 A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

4.2 A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

4.3 Ongoing punctuality issues will be addressed initially by telephone contact with parents and follow up letters. If the issues are still not resolved, a meeting will be held with the parent and child. Persistent absence will be addressed in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer.

5 Following up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

5.1 Keeping contact details up-to-date

- Ensure that families provide at least 3 different contact names and numbers
- At least one of the contacts should reside at a different address
- Remind parents half termly to ensure that contact details are up-to-date

5.2 First Day Absence Calling Procedures

- To take place before 11 a.m.
- Call everyone on the contact list **until an answer is obtained**
- If an overseas ring tone, consider that the family may have taken a holiday without explanation
- Leave messages if there is a Voicemail facility and send a text message

- If no reply, consider whether any children have additional agency support, such as a Social Worker, and contact them
- Consider any in school intelligence. No explanation from a supportive family is very concerning, so don't just concentrate on children who you already know to be vulnerable
- Make a prompt home visit, before 1.30 p.m., put a note through the door if there is no answer
- If there is no answer before 3.00 p.m., refer to Children's Services/MASH/Police and request a welfare call

5.3 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The school keeps a list of children who are potentially vulnerable to FGM. Any unexplained absence and/or overseas ringtone could indicate an increased level of risk and the school should immediately contact the NSPCC FGM Helpline, 0800 028 3550. Refer to the Safeguarding Policy for more detail.

5.4 Reporting a Child Missing Education

The school will follow the Local Authority agreed procedures for any child missing from education for over 20 school days. However, actions listed in 5.2 of this policy would be carried out from the first day of absence.

6 Reporting to Parents

6.1 Parents will be informed of their child's attendance at the October and February Parent/Teacher Consultation and annually in the written end-of-year report.

6.2 In addition, the Attendance Officer will write to parents to inform them if their child's attendance drops below 95%.

6.3 The Educational Welfare Officer will work with parents if their child's attendance drops below 90%.

7 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

7.1 Valid Reasons for Authorised Absence

- Illness and medical/dental appointments, as explained in sections 3.1 and 3.2
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If a pupil has SEND or medical reasons which affect their attendance, this will be documented, discussed and supported without prejudice.

7.2 Unauthorised Absence

Children should attend school, unless they are unwell or have a medical appointment. Family trips and holidays during term-time will not be approved, no matter what length.

7.3 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. 'Exceptional circumstances' are defined as:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside the above, the Principal agrees to consult with the Education Welfare Officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

8 Legal Sanctions

8.1 Once a child is registered in school, attendance is compulsory until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the child turns 16 (Year 11). It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child, when of statutory school age, accesses education appropriate to age, needs and ability.

8.2 Under the terms of the education related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, parent/carer(s) may be issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 if:

- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly
- They allow their child to take leave of absence in term time without a school's authorisation
- They fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after a leave of absence
- Their child persistently arrives late for school after the register is closed

8.3 Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

9 Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

9.1 Rewards

- Pupils who attend 100% each week receive a sticker reward during registration on a Friday.
- Weekly attendance percentage for the whole school is visually displayed in the reception area on an Attend and Succeed Board.
- All pupils with 100% attendance for the term will receive a certificate.
- Each term a letter to thank the families and carers for supporting attendance above 98% is sent.
- All pupils with 100% attendance for the academic year will receive a medal with their certificate at the end of the Summer Term.
- A winner, selected at random, from the 100% attendees will win a prize for their family to enjoy together.
- Schools will consider other incentives, e.g. weekly incentives for PA pupils who manage to attend for a full week, as appropriate.

10 Attendance Monitoring

10.1 The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

10.2 The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

10.3 Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

10.4 Attendance data is collected and stored in order to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

11 Roles and Responsibilities

11.1 The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Safeguarding Governor has responsibility for attendance to ensure that school systems are robust and decisive action is taken where necessary.

11.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

11.3 All Staff

- Offer a warm welcome to all children at the start of the day.
- Make it their business to ensure all that children feel valued and significant.
- As their most vital safeguarding measure, *listen to children*.
- Apply routine expectations in a calm and consistent fashion that is informed by our knowledge of individuals and their circumstances.
- Remember that lateness, like other problems that arise from a lack of organisation, is usually not the fault of the child. Solutions must be explored in an appropriate way with the appropriate person.
- Take every opportunity to model excellent social and emotional skills, using the five domains of SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning):
 - Self-Awareness
 - Managing feelings
 - Empathy
 - Motivation
 - Social Skills
- Behave in line with the Behaviour Policy and the Drapers Code of Conduct.
- All adults working in the school will make their own spaces and shared areas safe and nurturing places within which children can flourish, *in order to improve attendance*. (See Behaviour Policy)

11.4 The Attendance Officer

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Liaises with the Education Welfare Officer
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

- Manages any requests for term time absence, in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer, advising the Principal on any exceptional circumstances which may apply.

11.5 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the 'present' or 'absent' codes, and submitting this information to the school office in a timely and accurate fashion.

Teachers will prepare and teach stimulating and challenging lessons *in order to improve pupil attendance*. (See Teaching and Learning Policy)

Teachers will mark work in a manner that engages children in a dialogue about their learning, *in order to improve attendance*. (See Learning and Teaching Policy)

Teachers will raise and address attendance issues directly with parents at parent consultations, subject to prior consultation with the AO.

Teachers will promote good attendance through in-class incentive schemes.

11.6 Office Staff

Office Staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

12 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the policy holder. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

13 Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked to the schools' Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes (page 10)

Appendix 2 – Legislation and Guidance (page 12)

Appendix 3 – The importance of arriving in school on time (page 13)

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

The Importance of Arriving in School On Time

If your child is 5 minutes late a day the lose:				
25 minutes a week	1 hour 40 minutes a month	2 hours 30 minutes a half term	5 hours a term This is equivalent to 1 full day	16 hours 15 minutes a school year This is equivalent to over 3 days

If your child is 10 minutes late a day they lose:				
50 minutes a week	3 hours 20 minutes a month	5 hours a half term This is equivalent to 1 full day	10 hours a term This is equivalent to 2 full days	32 hours 30 minutes a school year This is equivalent to over 6 full days

If your child is 15 minutes late a day they lose:				
1 hour 15 minutes a week	5 hours a month This is equivalent to 1 full day	7 hours 30 minutes a half term This is equivalent to over 1 full days	15 hours a term This is equivalent to 3 full days	48 hours 45 minutes a school year This is equivalent to over 9 full days

If your child is 20 minutes late a day they lose:				
1 hour 40 minutes a week	6 hours 40 minutes a month This is equivalent to over 1 full days	10 hours a half term This is equivalent to over 2 full days	20 hours a term This is equivalent to 4 full days	65 hours a school year This is equivalent to 13 full days

It is important for your child to arrive punctually for school so they do not miss out on valuable learning experiences

Morning sessions begins at 8.55 a.m - 12.00 p.m
Afternoon session begins at 1.15 p.m - 3.15 p.m