

Davenham Church of England Primary School

“Working Together, Playing Together, Serving God and Serving Others”

“...encourage one another and build each other up...”
1 Thessalonians 5:11.

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Davenham C of E Primary School promotes the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children. The whole school community must take responsibility for attendance.

OBJECTIVES

1. To raise levels of attendance.
2. To improve punctuality.
3. To raise levels of achievement.
4. To win the support of parents / carers in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
5. To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
6. To investigate and act immediately where truancy is suspected or confirmed.
7. To work effectively with the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
8. To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement.

LEGISLATION

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.
- Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that “if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence”.

Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Additionally, regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities and further development.

DEFINITION OF PARENT

• Section 576 Education Act 1996 - Meaning of “parent”
For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a ‘parent’ and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

PROCEDURES (updated to include Covid-19 guidance)

Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty to safeguard all its pupils. If a child is absent, the parents/carers should inform the school on the first day of absence, and each following day of absence, stating the reason.

When a child is asked to self-isolate because they have symptoms of Covid-19 and is waiting for the results of a Covid-19 test then they will receive an ‘X’ in the register. This is to reflect that they have been absent, but that this was due to the pandemic and therefore their absence is authorised.

REGISTER PROCEDURES

- At 8.55 am the school gates will be locked and the whistle is blown.
- The class teacher calls the (electronic) register at 9am
- A note is made manually of number of children present for each session and initials of absent children. This manual record is used in the event of a Fire, Fire Drill or other reason for evacuation.
- Pupils arriving between 9am and 9.10am will receive an L mark to show that they arrived after registration but before the register closed.
- The Registers will be closed at 9.10am
- Pupils arriving after 9.10am will be registered by office staff and the appropriate code applied.
- Parents must sign pupils in using the electronic entry system and advise office staff if the child needs a school lunch.
- The school office staff will check absences against telephone messages. If no message has been received by 9.30 am they will phone parents. If it is confirmed that the child is ill, an “I” will be entered into the electronic register. If parents cannot be contacted the class teacher will be advised. The admin staff will continue to try to contact the parents / carers until they receive a reason for absence.
- Messages are recorded in a box to the side of the register

- When attendance falls below 90%, a letter is sent to the parents, unless there are mitigating circumstances, such as illness or a child self-isolating.

LATENESS

Parents / carers will be contacted by the class teacher if a child is late on a regular basis. A discussion will be held to understand reasons for absence and support will be offered if necessary. If lateness occurs for more than six times within a calendar month then a letter will be sent home asking for the parents/ carers to come into school to discuss the matter more formally. Advice will be sought from the Educational Welfare Officer with regard to matters of lateness and poor attendance. School is legally bound to pass on any information about non-attendance and lateness to the Educational Welfare Officer.

In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if your child arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, you will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

You may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Sickness, hospital appointments, dentist appointments, religious holidays, clinic appointments, authorised holidays and funerals are all considered authorised absences.

Medical appointments should be arranged if possible outside the school day. Where this is not possible, it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE AND FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:

- i. no reason for absence has been given
- ii. medical evidence is not received when requested
- iii. a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
- iv. a pupil arrives at school after registration has closed

Parents/carers should be aware that school may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action. The Fixed Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carers who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carers per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court (*see appendix 1*).

HOLIDAYS

A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid. The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring any attendance issues are dealt with in line with school policy.

In September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any Leave of Absence (holiday) during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'. In accordance with Government Policy the school discourages the taking of holidays in term time.

Any request for term time absence should be completed by the parents / carers on a Holiday Form and the form should be returned to the office. The office check the number of days absence the child has already had and this is recorded on the form. The request is then reviewed by the Headteacher in accordance with school policy (taking into account the reason for the request) and a decision is made as to whether the request will be authorised or not. The form is completed and signed by the Headteacher.

Any absence that is not authorised will be classed as unauthorised absence. This is recorded on the bottom line of the holiday request form. In this case, the absence must not be recorded with a H but with a G. In the case of unauthorised absence a letter is sent home explaining the reason and a copy of all forms are retained by the office.

The Headteacher and the Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence (holidays), they must complete a form available from the school office. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

Holidays must not be entered into the register in advance. A note is entered by the office stating code to be used.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance.

Where a day of religious observance;

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs

We ask that parents/carers notify the Headteacher in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

ENFORCED SCHOOL CLOSURE

If Davenham School was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. The expectation is children will still engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

WHAT CAN PARENTS / CARERS DO TO HELP?

Let the school know straight away why your child is absent. Home/school communication is extremely important in supporting your child to achieve and feel settled in school. Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.

APPENDIX 1

Cheshire West & Chester

Code of Conduct for Education Fixed Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Leave of Absence & Irregular Attendance)

1. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
2. A maximum of two FPNs may be issued in an academic year and these FPNs may be issued against each parent/carer of a child. Once two FPNs have been issued, should there be further unauthorised absences, the Local Authority are able to move to prosecution immediately.
3. A FPN may be issued per parent per child.
4. Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if:
 - Unauthorised absences of at least 10 consecutive school sessions (five school days).
 - Sessions either side of a weekend or school holiday will be counted as consecutive school days.
 - For poorly attending learners, at least 10 sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during a school term. These do not need to be consecutive.
 - For poorly attending learners, persistent late arrive at school in a term. Persistent means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
 - Truancy
 - The presence of an excluded child in a public place in the child's first five days of exclusion.
6. The academy must notify parents of the Attendance Policy and clearly state that parents may receive an FPN for an unauthorised leave of absence relating to holiday in term time.
7. Schools and the Education Welfare Services will take into account and exceptional circumstances when determining whether to issue a FPN.

Appendix 3

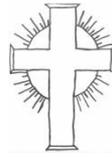
Absence Codes:

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used on the register.

Code I	Illness	Schools can request medical evidence from parents/carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.
Code M	Medical or dental appointments	Parents/Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.
Code C	Other circumstances	This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, i.e. – family funeral.
Code D	Dual Registered	This code will be used if a pupil is registered at two schools.
Code J	Interview	This code will be used when it has been agreed that the pupil can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam
Code P	Approved sporting activity	This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. – training sessions, trials and sporting events.
Code R	Religious Observation	This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one day absence for religious events.
Code V	Educational visits and trips	
Code W	Work Experience	
Code G	Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period	
Code U	Arrived late to school after 9.30am	
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided	
Code O	Absent from school without authorisation	
Code X	Period of self isolation due to Covid-19	

EQUALITY STATEMENT

Davenham Primary School is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all children, staff, parents, carers and visitors irrespective of their race, gender, gender identity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, age or pregnancy and maternity. We tackle discrimination through the positive promotion of equality, by valuing diversity, challenging bullying and stereotypes and by creating an inclusive environment which champions fairness and respect for all



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POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE

Effective Date		October 2015	
Review		Every 3 years	
Person Responsible		Joanne Hyslop	
Signed Headteacher	Signed Chair of Governors	of	Date Ratified
J Hyslop	J Green		10.2015

Review Date	Signed Headteacher	Signed Chair of Governors
19 November 2018	Joanne Hyslop	Debbie Mercer
13 December 2021	Joanne Hyslop	Debbie Mercer