



Doxey Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy creation	February 2018
Policy lead	Julie Allen
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Frequency of review	3 Years
Review due	Spring Term 2024

Doxey Primary School

Attendance policy

Principles:

Doxey Primary School believes that every child has the right to a full time education and will endeavour to ensure that every child who attends this school will receive their full entitlement by working in partnership with parents and carers and other services.

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately.

All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. We as a school have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Local Authority.

The Importance of Good Attendance and Its Link to Attainment:

- The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. February 22nd 2015 Department of Education). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.
- The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.
- For example, at the end of the 2012/13 Academic year 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90% only 75% of pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.
- The same pattern is also seen at primary school level, where pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter



less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence.

School Responsibilities:

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

Admissions Register:

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.



A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

Religious Observance:

The Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 Section 2 states that absence for religious observance should be “treated as authorised [absence] ... on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body which the parent belongs”. Thus, if the parent’s religious body marks the day as a religious festival, the school will authorise the absence. Leave for pupils for religious observance should only be agreed if the dates fall outside of normal holiday periods.

Elective Home Education:

If school receives written, dated, notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk of the decision to remove the child’s name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Attendance Register:

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day which shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either; AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark



Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the Local Authority can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

Definition of Persistent Absence:

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around 10% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period.

Persons Responsible for Attendance Matters

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- The head teacher and office administrator (attendance officer) will monitor attendance on a half termly basis and take appropriate action if a child's attendance falls below given thresholds, paying regard to any ongoing safeguarding matters.
- Parents should discuss with their child's class teacher, in the first instance, about any issues that may arise which could affect their child's attendance. The matter will be followed up by the Head Teacher or Inclusion Manager if required. Please also refer to our Behaviour and Bullying Policies.
- **See Appendix 1 & 3 for school procedures.**



Monitoring Attendance:

The Head Teacher and Attendance Officer meet on a half termly basis to monitor the attendance of individual pupils on a case by case basis taking into account extenuating circumstances.

The following actions are taken if attendance drops below thresholds set by the leadership of the school.

1. Attendance between 90% and 95% in a half term – parents are sent a letter which highlights to parents the fall in attendance below 95%
2. Attendance drops below 90% or no improvement in attendance over a term – parents are sent a letter which highlights the importance of good attendance and requires parents to produce medical evidence in order for any future absences to be authorised.
3. If there continues to be little or no improvement in attendance, then the following actions may be considered:
 - a. A meeting with the head teacher.
 - b. Referral to the Local Authority. This referral may lead to a parent or carer being fined by the Local Authority.

The importance of active parental engagement is recognised in addressing attendance issues and Doxey Primary School seek to resolve attendance issues directly with the parents or carers of a child without the involvement of the Local Authority.

Holiday Leave:

Requests for leave of absence for a holiday should be made using the appropriate form available from the school office no less than two weeks before the start of the requested period of leave. In line with the latest guidance from the DfE (School Attendance, 2019) the decision whether or not to grant permission for a leave of absence for a holiday is entirely at the headteachers discretion and can only be granted in exceptional circumstance. If the request is not received before the holiday is taken permission will not be granted retrospectively.

Changes to Penalty Notices:

Following recent Supreme Court rulings penalty notices may be issued as a result of any period of unauthorised absence, or if a child has more than 10 unauthorised late marks (U code). The revised code of conduct for issuing penalty notices can be found at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education. A letter is sent to all parents every September outlining the procedure for issuing penalty notices. See Appendix 3

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. **See appendix 4.**



Legal Framework :

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

Other documents:

DfE 2020: School Attendance; guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.



Appendix 1

School Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual Absences:

If a Child is Absent

If your child is absent from school, please telephone the school office between 8.30-9.30 am on the day of absence. For the safety of your child we need to know the reason why your child is off school. This needs to be a specific reason with sufficient detail to enable us to judge whether or not to authorise the absence.

The class teacher will record the absence in the register. If the school office has not been informed of the child's absence, we will contact a parent or guardian.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, for example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will immediately contact the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. See appendix 3.

Medical Appointments

In order not to disrupt your child's education we ask that any medical appointments are made after the school day where possible. If this is not possible we ask that as long as your child is well, they return to school as soon as possible after the appointment. If the appointment is local the child should be away from school for no longer than two hours. Please supply a letter or appointment card to verify the appointment.

Lateness

The start of the school day begins at 8.50am when children enter the school from the playground, followed by official registration at 9.00am. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as late (L code). Children who are persistently late will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and the Head Teacher.

The register closes at 9.20am; any child who arrives in school after that time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U Code) in the register even though they are in school.

Requests for Leave of Absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event.

We expect parents to contact the school at least two weeks in advance and normally this request will be treated as holiday leave. The head teacher can only grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis and will take into consideration the child's attendance throughout the rest of the school year.



Parental requests must be in writing to the Head teacher with whom the final decision rests.

Long-Term Absence

Our school will follow the Staffordshire protocol for children unable to access education due to medical reasons. We will liaise with support services to support pupils with their education provision.

Repeated Unauthorised Absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Local Authority support services. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Rewards for Good Attendance

Good attendance will be celebrated and recognised in school in the following ways:

- Weekly whole class attendance: Results will be published in the newsletter.
- Any child who has 100% attendance for a whole term will receive a certificate and entered in to a prize draw.
- Any child who has 100% attendance at the end of the academic year will receive a certificate, a medal and will be entered into a prize draw.

Appendix 2 - Changes to Penalty Notices for Absence from School Letter

Families First

Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street
Stafford
ST16 2DH
Email: paul.senior@staffordshire.gov.uk
Please ask for: Paul Senior

Date: September

Dear Parent / Carer,

Changes to Penalty Notices for Absence from School

Ensuring your child has access to a good education is very important to us. A key part of this is for all children and young people to regularly attend school, as this gives each learner the best chance to achieve their full potential. In light of the recent Isle of Wight court case and the subsequent Supreme Court ruling on school absences, we wanted to clarify our position for parents where there may be the potential for any ambiguity and to also ensure we are fully compliant with legal requirements.

As a result, we have made a few changes to our previous guidance to schools, parents and carers regarding absence from school. The new guidance will come into force from **1 January 2018** and is detailed below:

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. Your head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your head teacher to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. **This has now changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 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.



These changes have been agreed with local head teachers and have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education.

The vast majority of children and young people in Staffordshire have an excellent record of school attendance, and we recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly.

The Local Authority will continue to take appropriate action for absences during term time when we are notified by head teachers, both to support them in their role and to ensure local children can continue to achieve the best possible outcomes from attending local schools.

Yours faithfully

Paul Senior
Head of Education Vulnerable Learner Services 0-25



Appendix 3

First Day Response Letter

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to make you aware of the school procedure for children who have unexplained absences from school.

There have been public cases in the past where schools have not chased up the reasons as to why children are off of school. It has then transpired that there have been tragic circumstances around these absences, e.g. illness of a parent and a child unable to seek help.

We will do everything we can to prevent such situations occurring as I am sure you would agree that your child's safety is paramount to us all.

If your child is not going to be in school please call the office on 01785 450120 or email the school on admin@doxeyprimary.co.uk to report their absence. Please do this before 9.30am on the first day of the absence.

If we have not heard from you by 9.30am then we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is then we will make a home visit. However if we still haven't been able to get a response then we will report it to the police as your child will then be classed a 'missing child'.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe. Please let us know in good time why your child is absent from school. If you would like to talk to me about this please make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs T Wynn
Head Teacher



Appendix 4

Attendance Figures 2016 – 2019

National Average 96.1%

Academic Year	Percentage Attendance	Persistent Absence	Unauthorised Absence
	Actual	Actual	Actual
2016-2017	93.45%	11.89%	1.56%
2017-2018	94.90%	16.84%	1.50%
2018-2019	95.30%	09.69%	0.89%
2019-2020	Attendance not published due to COVID 19		