



DEANESFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Children of compulsory school age are entitled to an education by law.

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

School Attendance, DfE, July 2019

As a UNCRC Rights Respecting School, children's rights underpin our school ethos. Every child has the Right to an Education (Article 28, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). Persistent absence or lateness can impact on children receiving the full education they are entitled to.

At Deanesfield Primary School we believe that achievement is linked to time in school. This makes good attendance essential. The school encourages parents to do all they can to ensure that their child attends school promptly and regularly. Good habits formed early will benefit a child's education and are a good preparation for life. The school has a responsibility to promote and monitor regular attendance. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance and poor punctuality can all serve to undermine educational achievement. Such action will automatically put your child at a disadvantage.

2. The right to education

The Human Rights Act [1988] identifies the following entitlement:

- The right to education, play, leisure and cultural activity.
- The right to protection from work exploitation.
- The right to special care and social integration for children and young people with disabilities.
- The right to have a say in issues that affect them.

3. Legal Framework

Deanesfield Primary School works with the Participation Team, Early Intervention & Prevention Services [Local Education Authority] to support in enforcing the legal framework as defined in The Education Act 1996 and The Children's Act 1989 (section 36). There are responsibilities on parents, schools and the LA.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000) where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend





4. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Carers

- To ensure the regular attendance and punctuality of their child/ren.
- To work in partnership with the school.
- Ensure a good attitude to learning.
- To meet the social and emotional needs of the child/ren.

Pupils

- Listen to parents and the school.
- Communicate with parents and the school about any worries or anxieties.
- Go to bed at an appropriate time and come to school on time and ready to learn.

The School

- To provide a welcome and safe environment.
- To communicate with parents and carers.
- To provide education appropriate to the child.
- To promote good attendance for all.
- To keep accurate and up to date records on children's punctuality and attendance and to liaise with the LA regarding concerns over children's attendance.

The Governors

- To ensure there is clear policy and guidance applied fairly by the Head Teacher.
- To set attendance targets and monitor attendance data.

5. School Attendance

If a child is unfit for school parents should make contact with the school on the first day of absence. You will need to contact the school via the School's Gateway app [Appendix A] or via the telephone, preferably before 9am on the first day of absence. Your message will need to state your child's name, class and the reason why they cannot attend. If they are ill, please give a clear explanation of their conditions. If parents do not make contact to explain their child's non-attendance, a member of staff will contact the parent.

The school will contact parents first if there are concerns about a child's attendance. To ensure good communication parents must be responsible for updating contact details. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they need support to resolve difficulties with attendance and punctuality.

A letter is sent home if there is still no reason is given for absence. Letters are also sent home to inform parents if the school is concerned about the child's attendance or punctuality. When there is a general concern about a child's attendance and there is also poor communication with home, parents may be invited to meet with a senior member of staff to discuss this.

Illness

Any illness that requires home rest and in general is not treated by prescribed medication will be authorised on a 'day to day' basis. On the third day of illness it is our expectation that parents/carers will seek medical advice. We reserve the right to request medical evidence in order to authorise any further leave especially if your child's attendance has dipped below 95%.





Parents/carers who have a child diagnosed with a contagious disease should alert the school as soon as possible. Any sessions missed may need supporting evidence to authorise the leave. Parents/carers will be advised on a case by case basis. Children with an existing medical condition previously recorded by the school still have to follow the same attendance criteria.

Medical consent forms can be obtained from the Welfare room [open for drop in to parents 8.30-9.00am; 3.15-3.30pm] to enable to staff to administer prescribed medication during school hours.

Medical

All appointments, where possible, should be made out of school hours. If this is unavoidable; for example an emergency appointment, your child should still attend school before/after the appointment. Any session missed that was deemed reasonable to attend will be marked as unauthorised. Any sibling should attend school as normal.

All referred clinic/hospital appointments must be made in advance and by supported by an appointment letter in order to authorise any missed sessions. All routine appointments [dentist, optician, GP, hospital etc...] should be made outside of school hours or in the holidays. Any sessions taken where this reason is given will be marked as unauthorised.

Medical evidence will be requested. Parents/carers must present a prescription, medical paperwork or an appointment card/letter at the school office upon their return. If sufficient evidence is not received during the week of the missing session/s the leave in question may be marked as unauthorised.

6. Punctuality

Lateness can have a detrimental effect on:

- A child's learning.
- The learning of others.
- A child's sense of belonging.
- A child's behaviour.

A late book is kept in the office which parents or children must sign when arriving late, giving a reason. This will be logged on CPOMS [Child Protection Online Monitoring System] and will be monitored by the Welfare Officer, Inclusion Manager and the Participation Officer. Individuals who are persistently late are considered by the Head Teacher and Participation Officer in their regular monitoring meetings.

7. Exceptional Leave

DFE Guidance states that schools are not obliged to agree to holidays in term time.

However we recognise there may be exceptional circumstances which can be considered by the Head Teacher for leave during the school term time. Statutory regulations demand that parents make this request in writing to the Head Teacher. This letter must contain the reason for the request and the dates, including the return date.

Please note that exceptional leave will **NOT** be granted:

- For leave during term time on an annual basis.
- Those with poor attendance (attendance less than 95%).





If leave is taken which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher, parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 rising to £120 per parent per child, or a summons to appear at Uxbridge Magistrates Court.

Always plan well ahead wherever possible, to enable adjustments to your plans should your request for exceptional leave not be authorised by the Head Teacher. You should receive a response within 14 days of any received request.

If children do not return by the agreed date, (contained in the letter of request and the Head Teacher's authorisation) then following a further 10 day period the **child can be removed from the school roll, which would mean that you have to re-apply for a school place by contacting the London Borough of Hillingdon Admissions Department, or at the borough where you live if you are not a Hillingdon resident.**

If there are extenuating circumstances which prevent return on the planned date it is essential that parents make every effort to contact the school and explain the reason for the continued absence.

Exceptional leave - Performance Licences for Hillingdon resident pupils

The applicant (usually the Production Company or theatrical agent) is obliged to seek the view of school, including the agreed threshold for agreement to exceptional leave for a performance license. Following this the Local Authority will issue Performance Licences based on information provided by applicants.

Deanesfield Primary School's agreed threshold for agreeing a Performance Licence requests are as follows:

- pupil attendance is expected to be on average, over the last two years, 95+%
- making expected or better levels of progress

Attendance Panels

Deanesfield Primary School and the LA follow the DFE guidelines for Attendance Panels. This involves our Participation Officer convening an Attendance Panel at our school. An agreement to improve the attendance and punctuality is signed and a Review date given. If the situation does not improve sufficiently, **parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice [not fixed] of £60 if paid within 21 days. This can rise to £120 per parent per child, or a summons to appear at Uxbridge Magistrates Court. If you don't pay within 28 days you may be prosecuted.**

8. Attendance Targets

Attendance at school is clearly an important pre-requisite for a successful and fulfilling career. Prolonged absence, irregular attendance and lack of punctuality can all serve to undermine educational achievement and result in considerable long-term disadvantage to children and young people. Pupils who do not attend regularly may be placed at considerable risk and, in some cases, may be drawn into patterns of antisocial or criminal behaviour.

The DFE expect children to attend at least 95% of the time. The school monitors attendance and punctuality and works with parents to ensure all children achieve targets. The Head teacher, Inclusion Manager and Participation Officer monitor data, discuss individuals and agree action.

The school positively reinforces good attendance and punctuality by;

- Liaising with appropriate agencies where support for parents is needed.





- Providing curriculum advice to children and parents concerning health matters.
- Providing Pastoral Support Plans and Parenting Contracts for those pupils at risk of exclusion.

9. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy bi-annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.





Appendix A

Schoolgateway

Free app and text messaging system to report absence and attendance

Deansfield Primary School use a free smartphone app called 'School Gateway' which is used to improve our communications to Parents with regard to children's absence and attendance.

Parents will need to use this app to inform us of your child's absence on any given day and will allow us to record, monitor and respond to you, all completely free of charge.

The 'School Gateway' app available to download for Apple (iOS 8 on the iPhone 4S or later, iPad, iPod Touch) and Android (4.0 / Ice Cream Sandwich or later) devices.

The set-up process is simple and will take no more than a couple of minutes:

1. Search for "School Gateway" in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on a mobile phone go to www.schoolgateway.com/apple (Apple) or www.schoolgateway.com/android (Android)
2. Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to "Allow Push Notifications"
3. When you launch School Gateway for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number that are registered with the school
4. The system will send a PIN code to your mobile phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated.

As soon as you've got the system set-up, all of the text messages with regard to absence and attendance will appear in the app; Parents will receive notifications/alerts as normal.

