



GREAT DENHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

*Our purpose is to support the individual needs of the statement. We offer a safe and caring environment supported by an enthusiastic team of professionals.
Working in partnership with families, we enable children to lead successful lives and be useful and protective members of society.*

We believe that we can improve the life chances of all pupils by ensuring that all staff, pupils and parent/carers are aware of the importance of and take responsibility for regular attendance.

At Great Denham Primary School we believe that it is important to provide an environment in which:

- Children are supported in reaching their potential in order that they can attain at the highest possible level
- Everyone is valued, praised and rewarded
- Positive relationships are promoted
- Everyone has the right to feel safe
- The curriculum will be designed to reflect the interests and needs of the pupils ensuring engagement and enjoyment in their learning
- There is an expectation that good attendance is the key to success
- The monitoring and evaluating of individual attendance patterns supports the learning of individuals

Positive Environment

We believe that children will want to attend regularly if they are in an environment which is caring and supportive and which promotes respect for all. Learning opportunities are varied and focussed on individual needs of the pupil. Lessons are well planned, resourced and imaginative and are delivered with pace, providing opportunities for challenge and engagement and which meet pupil needs in terms of differentiation and learning styles.

Responsibilities

Children – it is expected that they will

- Attend school regularly
- Behave appropriately
- Arrive on time and stay focused on their learning

Class teacher - in the first instance it is the responsibility of the class teacher to monitor attendance and make early interventions where necessary actions may include:

- Using weekly attendance data for their class to celebrate good attendance and discuss reasons for absence with children
- Inviting parents into school to discuss problems with attendance
- Liaise with the family support worker re: identified issues to ensure a collaborative approach.
- Also see “Strategies for promoting good attendance”

It is teacher’s responsibility to collate and send suitable work to the child’s home and make arrangements for the return and marking of the work where the absence is likely to be of more than three days.

Attendance Officer (Headteacher)

It is the Attendance Officer’s responsibility to:

- Work with teachers in the monitoring and early identification of attendance issues and where necessary in agreeing appropriate targets
- Liaise with external agencies as part of referral process (eg Social Services, CAMHS etc).
- Liaise with EWS as appropriate and meet named EWO once every half term
- Liaise with parents/carers as appropriate
- Where there is a sudden change in a pupil’s attendance pattern or where attendance is persistently low, arrange a Professionals' Meeting to discuss the concern
- Arrange home visits to support parents/carers in improving attendance (usually carried out by the family support worker and/or class teacher
- Devise and implement a range of strategies to support pupil attendance e.g. identifying alternative curriculum opportunities.

Attendance Administration Officer (Office Manager)

It is the Attendance Administration Officer's responsibility to:

- Check daily register taken by class teachers in a timely fashion (ie by 9.30am latest)
- Contact parents/carers in the event of a pupil absence in a timely manner (by 9.30am)
- Provide the data once every two weeks to the attendance officer to support her in identifying the issues
- Print off class group attendance register and distribute to appropriate class teachers every Friday morning as well as providing the weekly class attendance figures for assembly on Thursday
- Print off school attendance register and distribute to Attendance Officer once a week

Headteacher

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation, monitoring and reviewing the Attendance policy
- A termly attendance report is provided for the governors
- Communicate the successes in terms of attendance through assemblies and displays

Parents/Carers

- Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- When their child cannot attend they should contact the school between 8.30am and 9.00am on the first day of absence to inform the school as to the reason for absence. The responsibility for authorising the absence lies with the school and not the parent/carer.

Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

As part of the reward system and general ethos of the school we encourage good attendance through praise and reward. Listed below are some of the successful individual strategies that we use.

- Praise certificates sent home to parents reporting attendance percentage each term (bronze, silver and gold certificates) Gold certificates will be awarded for children with 100% attendance over a term, silver 99 – 98% and bronze for 97 and 96%
- Class teacher frequently raises profile of good attendance with individuals
- Weekly raffle tickets distributed on a Friday morning to children with 100% attendance that week
- End of term raffle for all children with tickets for 100% attendance (given out weekly)
- Raising the profile of good attendance by setting targets for poor attendees
- EWS to action individual rewards where individuals have met agreed targets
- Attendance will be an agenda item at every governors meeting in which a report will be prepared by the Headteacher

Procedures for non-Attendance

- Contact made with parent/carer on first day of non-attendance and recorded Attendance Officer referral made and actioned in liaison with tutor
- Daily monitoring of absence by Attendance Officer and weekly analyses to determine patterns/trends, leading appropriate actions (see above)
- Fortnightly monitoring and analysis of whole school attendance by Attendance Officer and appropriate strategies deployed
- Percentages of authorised and unauthorised attendance calculated every half term and appropriate letters sent by the Attendance Admin Officer
- Parents/carers to be informed by Attendance Officer as soon as concerns are identified with regard to attendance
- Timely referrals made to the EWS of attendance concerns i.e.:-
 - a. After insufficient explanation of absence to Attendance Officer following tutor interventions
 - b. After one week of absence and where the Attendance Officer has been unable to make appropriate interventions due to lack of cooperation from home
 - c. On the third incomplete week of attendance
 - d. If the parent informs the teacher of school refusal

- Fixed term exclusions are kept to a minimum, but where they are necessary work is set for the period of exclusion
- Poor attendees have an attendance target on their Individual Education Plans
- Other agencies e.g. Educational Psychology Services are used to support parents/carers to improve their child's attendance.

Monitoring Procedures

Teacher

- Using weekly attendance data for their classes celebrate good attendance and discuss reasons for absence with children (key stage 2 upwards)
- Will discuss patterns and trends with the child and teacher/s concerned and devise appropriate strategies accordingly.

Attendance Officer

See monitoring under responsibilities above.

Headteacher

See monitoring under responsibilities above.

Authorising Absence (Including Holidays)

- The school discourages the taking of holidays during term time as this has a detrimental effect on attainment and social inclusion
- Absence can only be authorised by the school and not by parent/carers
- If a parent applies to remove their child from school for a family holiday, the Headteacher may agree to the request from the parent and the absence will be authorised. If permission is not sought the absence will be unauthorised.
- If a parent decides to take their child on an extended holiday, without informing the school, the school may consult with EWS and remove the child's name from the school register after four weeks

Reintegration procedures following long term absence

When a child begins their education at Great Denham Primary, an individual integration programme is devised for them. Frequently, the child has had interrupted schooling, the extent of this is taken into consideration, when devising the plan, however it is expected that the majority of pupils will be attending full time within three weeks.

Similarly, an individual attendance programme is negotiated for any child who has had extended absence due to attendance difficulties.

Any child experiencing a prolonged illness will be provided with work, or referred to the Medical Needs Team, whichever is appropriate.

The Attendance Officer will devise and implement a range of strategies to secure improved attendance e.g. identifying alternative curriculum opportunities.

Fixed Penalty Notices

A pre-referral will be arranged in circumstances of parentally condoned unauthorised absence where the parent

- Is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance; and
- Is not willing to take responsibility for doing so

If this is unsuccessful a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

Normally, a parent will receive a warning letter before the Fixed Penalty Notice is issued for a first offence.

Fixed Penalty Notices will only be used when all other intervention has failed.

Following school interventions a Formal Warning Letter may be issued by The Education Welfare Officer if attendance does not improve.

Formal Warning Letters

The letter formally:

- Notes the concerns that school and the Education Welfare Service have about the child's irregular attendance
- Reminds the parent/carer of their responsibilities under the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child's regular school attendanc.
- Informs the parent/carer that the school will not authorise any future absences as medical, unless they receive a GP letter explaining the reason for the absence

The warning letter remains in force for six months from the date it was written and will be copied to the school.

Parenting Contracts

Section 19 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows schools and Local Education Authorities to enter into voluntary "Parenting Contracts" with parents when their child is truanting.

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent/carer and either the Governing Body of the school or the Local Education Authority which could be suggested at a pre-referral meeting. The contract should contain:

- A statement by the parent that they agree to comply for a specified period with the requirements specified in the contract
- A statement by the Governing Body or Local Education Authority agreeing to provide support to the parent for the purpose of complying with the contract

Great Denham Primary supports parents in any way they can, to assist in improving their child's attendance. However, up until now we have not used a formal written contract, if it is deemed appropriate they will be used in the future.

How the policy will be monitored

The policy will be monitored in the following ways:

- A whole school attendance target will be set with the named EWO at the beginning of every academic year
- Attendance data will be analysed every two weeks by the Attendance Officer and appropriate action taken when necessary
- Attendance registers will be checked by the school and the EWO every two weeks
- Individual attendance will be discussed with pupils weekly by the teacher. The Attendance Officer will agree targets and set and actions taken where necessary and liaise with the class teacher.
- Parents/carers will be informed of their child's attendance percentage at least at the end of every term. This will be in relation to the school's annual target.
- The class with the highest attendance will be mentioned in the weekly newsletter each week
- The Headteacher will report on attendance data to the Governing Body termly and comment on the school's progress in meeting the whole school attendance target
- The Headteacher will report attendance issues to the Improvement and Strategy Group when appropriate
- Reference to addressing unsatisfactory attendance will be made through the School Development Plan

The Policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

Date of last review January 2015