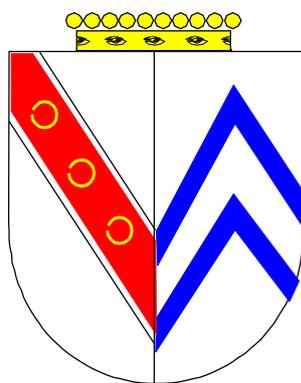


# THE DAWNAY SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE (PUPIL) POLICY

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<b>Approved by Governors:</b>	<b>Autumn 2017</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>Autumn 2019</b>
<b>Responsibility:</b>	<b>Full Governing Body</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

## **1) Introduction**

The Staff and Governing Body at The Dawnay School give a high priority to their pupils' educational achievement and believe that maximum pupil attendance and punctuality are essential in order for all children to achieve their full potential. This policy has been introduced in order to help achieve this aim and the staff and governors are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that it is effectively and appropriately implemented.

Whole school attendance is monitored weekly by the school office and Head Teacher and half termly by the Education Welfare Officer, to ensure that measures are taken to reduce poor attendance and maintain good attendance.

## **2) Background and Principles**

There are strong and proven links between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Attendance of less than 95% (i.e. absences of 9.5 days or more out of the 190 pupil days in the school year) has been shown to compromise pupil attainment. At 90% attendance pupils miss the equivalent of almost 4 weeks education (19 days) and only 10% of pupils who are persistently absent from school achieve 5 A-C grades at GCSE.

Time off school for any reason is not a right. The Headteacher cannot authorise absence taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, for which evidence may be requested.

Any application for time off school in excess of 5 days in any academic year needs to be made in writing to the Chair of Governors. In exceptional circumstances, leave may be the Head Teacher.

This school acknowledges that extended visits to the country of family origin provide important opportunities to reaffirm family, linguistic and cultural identities and recognises that these can be positive personal and educational experiences. However there is strong evidence to indicate that where such visits result in significant absence from school during term time, the disruption to the child's education can have a negative impact on his/ her educational attainment. Consequently, planned absences during term-time for any reason requires prior authorisation from the Head Teacher.

Information for parents/carers which clarifies their legal responsibilities regarding attendance and highlights the impact of absences during term-time will be made available each year to all parents/carers in the following ways; as part of parent evenings, in the school's prospectus, through newsletters, through new parent and pupil induction, via the school's website and on end of year reports.

## **3) Absence in term time**

Absence from school falls into two categories, authorised and unauthorised. Absence may be authorised when a child is genuinely ill, has a hospital or other medical appointment, is visiting another school or for religious reasons. Absence will not be authorised for birthday treats, oversleeping due to a late night or visiting relatives. There is important legislation regarding taking leave of absence during term time:

The Head Teacher will consider whether there are exceptional circumstances together for all leave of absence requests. The Head Teacher will inform the parent/carer within 7 school days of receipt of the application whether or not the request has been authorised.

The Head Teacher is fully within their rights to turn applications down and refuse permission for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time.

The Head Teacher is legally required to record the number and frequency of absences taken during term time throughout each pupil's school career and to inform the Education Welfare Officer if there is cause for concern. In the case of unauthorised

absences, the school reserves the right to request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to parents as a means of enforcing attendance (see under section 7 below), where the absence is for 5 or more days.

#### **4) Absence in exceptional circumstances**

The Head Teacher may, on occasion, make a judgement that there are genuine and exceptional circumstances pertaining to an application to take a pupil out of school during term time.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. Parents are asked to consider that it is not always in the best interests of the child nor wholly appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. School and school friendships and relationships can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background to life during times of upheaval.

#### **5) Procedures for Lateness**

Children who arrive after registers have been marked and returned to the school office must report directly to the school office. The registers close at 9.15 in the morning and 1.15 in the afternoon and any child arriving after this time, for any reason other than a medical appointment or other authorised absence will be marked late and recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session.

Parents/carers must sign out children who have to leave during the school day. School administrative staff will witness this.

#### **6) Strategies for maximising attendance**

- Attendance and punctuality will be promoted through assemblies and newsletters.
- If a child's attendance level drops below 95%, the Head Teacher will commence close monitoring of that child's attendance level to ensure that this does not become persistent
- If a child's attendance level drops below 90%, and does not appear to be improving, the Head Teacher will write to the parents/carers and request an attendance panel with support by the EWO. This will be followed by a letter outlining the agreement made.
- If a child's attendance level still fails to improve, despite efforts on the part of the school to secure improved attendance, the Head Teacher will consult with the Education Welfare Officer and careful consideration will be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice to the child's parent/carer.

#### **7) Penalty Notices**

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If a penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted
- Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a

warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorized sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents refusal to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or the EWO will be a factor when considering the issue of a penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason. As above, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each children** who is absent

## **8) Summary of responsibilities**

### **Parents/carers will be asked to:**

- Wrap any authorised days of term time absence (for exceptional circumstances) around existing school holiday periods to minimise time out of school
- Weigh the benefits to the family of term time absences against detriment to the child's/children's educational progress and attainment
- Consider whether it is wholly necessary for the child/children to accompany adults in some circumstances
- Avoid requesting term time absences during periods where there are National Curriculum assessments
- Attempt to ensure their child attends school regularly in accordance with the signed Home School Partnership agreement
- Notify the school office by phone/letter by 9am on the first day of any unforeseen absence (e.g. sickness/ family emergency), **and everyday thereafter**.

### **The Headteacher will:**

- Monitor attendance and, where concerns are identified, consult with parents/ outside agencies to agree actions to address identified issues
- In consultation with LA and Governors, monitor attendance
- Inform Governors of attendance data through Head Teacher reports
- Inform parents of attendance percentages for their pupil/s at the end of the school year
- Promote excellent attendance by pupils
- Decide if an application for leave of absence will be authorised or not and consider the issuing of Penalty Notices where appropriate

### **Class Teachers will:**

- Ensure that registers are taken at the start of each session
- Report any concerns relating to attendance to the school office/Head Teacher

### **School Attendance Administrator will:**

- Scrutinise attendance data on a weekly basis
- Print off class data each week for monitoring by the Headteacher
- Support the Headteacher in monitoring and identifying levels of absence/lateness causing concern and sending appropriate letters and communication to parents

### **The Education Welfare Officer will:**

- Support the school to develop strategies to meet acceptable levels of attendance

### **The Governing Body will:**

- Use the school's website to report levels of attendance including authorised and unauthorised absence
- Annually review the Attendance Policy