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THE DEANES

ATTENDANCE POLICY



The Deanes Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

This document has been produced to explain to all concerned the rights and responsibilities relating to the attendance of pupils at this school. If children do not arrive in school, they cannot be educated. Furthermore good attendance promotes the best learning opportunities, punctuality and reliability; all valuable attributes for a successful working life after leaving school. **Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent(s) or carer(s).**

The DfE states that:

‘children who do not regularly attend school rarely achieve their full potential. Not only do they miss lessons, but patchy attendance makes it more difficult to catch up.’

Good attendance at school is one of the ways that schools can ensure the safety of young people and is considered part of the safeguarding duties of this school.

Attendance Target and Expectations

The Deanes has an attendance target that is reviewed annually, and it is expected that the whole school community will work towards this target of **97%**. The Deanes is also actively working to reduce the number of pupils whom the Department for Education classifies as ‘Persistent Absentees’ (<90% attendance).

The expectation is that every pupil will attend 100% of the sessions available to them, unless they are prevented from doing so by *sickness or unavoidable cause*. Please see below for clarification on these terms.

The Deanes Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

The Deanes recognises the high correlation between achievement and attendance. Therefore, in order to ensure high levels of attendance at The Deanes, there is a clearly defined process communicated to all stakeholders.

- The importance of good attendance is an integral part of the home/school agreement and expectations are made clear to parents within this agreement and the ‘Good Attendance = Good Grades’ poster (Appendix 1) is available on the website.
- Parents/carers receive communication regarding attendance through newsletters, parent’s evenings, pupil’s planners, direct correspondence and within a pupil’s report.
- There are clear procedures for the reporting of absence.

- The taking of holidays during the school terms is prohibited, unless in exceptional circumstances. Holidays taken during term time will not be routinely authorised and a penalty notice may be issued.
- The SIMS system is used effectively to monitor attendance at registration and lessons.
- Attendance figures are reported weekly and appropriate targets are set annually. Every pupil's attendance is monitored and reviewed on a weekly basis.
- Attendance figures are monitored on a welfare basis by the Student Support Team.
- We work co-operatively with external agencies to deal with problems of irregular attendance.
- We keep accurate records of all exclusions and, in accordance with statutory guidance, report them to the Governing Body and the Local Authority (LA). We take appropriate action to reduce these.
- We continue to monitor the attendance of Looked After Children, those from ethnic minorities, Disadvantaged Pupils, vulnerable pupils, students with a SEN status and mid term admissions.
- All cases where a pupil's attendance falls below 95% are investigated by the school. There is a clear, staged process for identifying and tackling irregular attendance, undertaken by The Deanes' internal attendance team, Aquinas and the Local Authority.
- The attendance of any pupil classed as a Persistent Absentee (below 90%) is monitored every week and strategies implemented to try and support the pupil and family to improve attendance
- Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.
- Positive reinforcements are promoted through termly celebration assemblies. Certificates and badges are awarded to pupils with 96% and above attendance. The Headteacher and a Governor also meet with students that have 100% attendance for the academic year.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted

unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. See Appendix 2 for a form (online as well).

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child.

The DfE have not provided any guidelines as to what they would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the Headteacher.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days). If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Pupils who have been missing from school without explanation from parents for a period of ten consecutive days will be considered by the school to be a Child Missing from Education (CME), in compliance with the Education Act 436A. Safeguarding interventions such as unannounced home visits by school and Aquinas staff, referrals to Essex Police for Police Welfare Checks and referrals to the Local Authority for CME investigations will all be considered by The Deanes in order to ensure the safeguarding of all our pupils.

What is an authorised absence?

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be out of school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. Acceptable reasons for absence may include:

- Illness or injury – **of a nature which prevents the student from undertaking normal school work or is contagious.** Please refer to the NHS Website for further guidance. [NHS - too ill for school?](#)
- Emergency medical/ dental appointments - *Please note that for medical appointments we will authorise a morning or an afternoon session. If circumstances dictate that a whole day is required, please provide evidence to support this.*
- Family bereavement
- Day of religious observance

- Exclusion – results from a decision taken by the school. The school is responsible for setting work for the excluded pupils.
- If permission has been granted in advance by the Headteacher.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Inappropriate use of authorised absences can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence and will be followed up within the school's attendance procedures.

Absence due to Illness

Where there are persistent concerns, the school will require supporting evidence of medical intervention. This may take the form of:

- ✓ A note from the practice nurse
- ✓ Proof of prescription
- ✓ Packaging for prescribed medication
- ✓ Medical card stamped at practice (this will only authorise the session of the appointment).

There is an expectation that parents/carers provide school with regularly updated medical evidence to support those students with long term medical conditions.

NB: Minor ailments, as defined by the NHS (coughs/colds, sore throat, headache, stomach ache and period pains) are not justifiable reasons to miss school and absences for these reasons will not be routinely authorised.

What is an unauthorised absence?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. Unacceptable reasons for absence may include but are not limited to:

- Minor ailments
- Visiting relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Looking after siblings
- Truancy
- Arriving at school too late to get a mark
- Haircuts
- Transport difficulties
- Slept late
- Minding the House
- Unapproved holidays.

The Role of the Parent/ Carer

- Parents/ carers are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends school.
- Parents/ carers are expected to follow the procedure for reporting absences as detailed below.

Expectations of Pupils

- Pupils must ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Pupils will attend all lessons punctually.
- Pupils can expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.
- Pupils will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school via our rewards systems where appropriate.

Registration, Lateness and First Day Absence

The school operates a first day response to first day absence; we will text/e-mail parents if we have not heard from them. This is because we believe it is our joint responsibility to ensure a child's safety as well as his/her regular school attendance.

We would expect a parent to telephone, text or e-mail the school on the morning of the first day of absence, and any subsequent days thereafter and provide a reason for the absence. However, we may require a medical certificate to justify frequent or extensive absences. If we do not receive an explanation for the absence on the student's return to school, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, the school may not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on the pupil's report. The school has a right to request an explanation. Written, text or phone-call confirmation is expected from parents/carers to cover the whole period of the absence.

Registration

Pupils should be in school for both morning and afternoon registration. Morning registration is at **8.30 am**. If a pupil arrives after this time, but before **8.50 am**, they must register in Form and will be marked as late and the time of arrival recorded.

Should a pupil arrive after **8.50 am**, they must register at Student Services/ Attendance Office and will receive an unauthorised absence/ late mark.

Afternoon registration is at **1.45 pm**

Pupils who are late on two or more occasions will be subject to detention set by their Form Tutor or Director of Key Stage.

In circumstances such as bad weather or transport difficulties the schools may keep the register open for a longer period.

- Registers are legal documents that record whether parents or carers have fulfilled their legal obligations.
- A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance
- They are the best way to track pupils in cases of emergency (e.g. in the unlikelyhood of a fire).

Truancy from school

Should a pupil be discovered to have been truanting from a lesson during the school day, that pupil will be expected to make up the time which they have missed from their studies in the form of a detention with the subject teacher whose lesson was truanted. This will be notified to parents/ carers in the usual way.

Should a pupil be found to have truanted a sequence of lessons on any school day, the appropriate Director of Key Stage will be notified of the absence by the subject teacher. This will result in a pupil being placed on an attendance report which will be monitored by the Form Tutor.

In the event of a pupil being reported as missing from lesson, the School Attendance Officer will be contacted by the member of staff noting the absence of the pupil. The Attendance Officer will contact home, having first checked to see whether there may be a reason for the missing lesson mark. The School Attendance Officer will also inform the Form Tutor so that they can take follow up action as appropriate.

Once the parent/ carer has been notified of the truancy, the pupil becomes the responsibility of the parent/ carer and it is expected, where possible, that the parent/ carer will return the pupil to school at the earliest opportunity.

If a pupil is reported as missing from the school during the morning session and the parents/ carers duly notified, the afternoon session will be deemed unauthorised absence if the pupil does not return for registration.

The school understands the importance of contacting the parent/carer in view of the potential safeguarding implications of a pupil going missing from lessons.

Aquinas

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties are not resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to Aquinas. Aquinas works alongside the school's internal attendance team to help the school promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, and to act early to address patterns of absence.

They conduct weekly attendance reviews for all pupils, identify individual concerns and recommend the appropriate action. The process of intervention implemented by

Aquinas is solely designed to overcome any identified barrier to a student's school attendance without the need for legal action. The process is primarily aimed to work with pupils and parents to firstly inform them the concern, then engage with them to identify and resolve any barriers affecting attendance. It is only where all support-centred measures have failed to make an impact and the unauthorised absences continue, that legal action in the form of penalty notice will be considered.

Aquinas is accredited by Essex Police under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) with the power to issue penalty notices.

Attendance Compliance Service (Local Authority) and Legal Enforcement

The Local Authority carries out statutory duties to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance. The school may refer a student to the LA where attendance remains a concern following intervention by The Deanes and Aquinas. The Local Authority will work with schools and families to address serious attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action as outlined below may be taken against parents/carers

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority:

- Parents who are found guilty of being in breach of the Education Act with regards to attendance may be taken to court and face fines of up to £2500 and, in some cases, 3 months' imprisonment.
- The Local Authority can also use court proceedings to seek an Education Supervision Order to be placed on the child.
- During these court proceedings, the magistrates may consider issuing a Parenting Order, which would include parents attending mandatory parenting skills sessions

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

Penalty notices apply to students of statutory school age, which ends in Year 11. Aquinas and Essex Local Authority have agreed to use penalty notices for the following circumstances:

Penalty notices may be issued where there has been unauthorised absence. Parent/carers will receive a warning letter at least ten days prior to the issue of a penalty notice. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the legal intervention process will be used. The penalty for each parent is £60 for each child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to ensure that a child attends school punctually and regularly could lead to legal action being taken against the parent.

This could result in each parent/carer receiving a fine of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months' imprisonment.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance and prepare pupils for their lives beyond school. Equally, parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. All staff are committed to working with parents and students, as this is the best way to ensure the highest level of attendance for our school community.

Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy *annually* and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

Signed by:

**Chair of Local
Governing Board**

Headteacher:

Date:

The Deanes



Good attendance = good grades



Attendance % Rate	Total number of day off in a school year	Impact on your GCSE results
100%	0 days	Above 95% attendance - very good chance of 5 A* - C Grades
95%	10 days	94% attendance - fair chance of 5 A* - C Grades
90%	20 Days	92% attendance - fair chance of 5 A* - C Grades 90% attendance - less than 50% chance of 5 A* - C Grades
85%	30 Days	88% attendance - less than 35% change of 5 A* - C Grades Less than 85% attendance - less than 30% change of 5 A* - C Grades

APPENDIX 2

THE DEANES

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress.

Parents should not take their children out of school in term time.

There is no legal right to do so. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

If the absence is taken without being authorised, the case will be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Name of Child(ren):	
Date of Birth:	
Tutor Group:	

Date of First Day of Absence: _____

Date of Return: _____

Number of Days Requested: _____

Please attach a letter outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence is being applied for. If the circumstances are not considered exceptional, the leave will not be granted and absences will be recorded as unauthorised

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Name: _____

School/Office use only:

Attendance percentage preceding 12 weeks:			
Number of sessions absence this academic year:	Authorised	Unauthorised	Total

On your 'Application for Leave of Absence' form please give details of all siblings, dates of birth and current schools.

Thank you.