

LEARNING TOGETHER TO BE OUR BEST

**DOVER PARK  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**Pupil Attendance Policy**

Date agreed: March 2024

Review date: March 2025

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair Board of Governors

## Dover Park Primary School Attendance Policy

*It is Dover Park Primary School's rule that all children should be present for both morning and afternoon registration and attend both morning and afternoon sessions in full every day that the school is open to children.*

### **1. Policy statement and principles**

#### 1.1 Policy aims and principles

We believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Dover Park aims to raise standards in education and to ensure that students achieve their full potential. We recognise that this aim is not possible if they do not regularly attend school, or are persistently late.

Students are expected to attend school every day. It is the responsibility of parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children who are registered at Dover Park attend regularly and are in school on-time. The school endeavours to support parents and students in this.

Attendance and punctuality issues can have a detrimental effect on the education that a student receives. Evidence shows that missing out on lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind and the tendency for them to achieve less than those students with a good attendance record.

We are committed to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education
- Act early to address patterns of absence and poor punctuality

This policy is written in line with current legislation and guidance.

#### 1.2 Complaints

All complaints are dealt with under the School's Complaints Policy.

Complaints should be made in writing and will follow the school complaint procedures and set timescales. The handling of complaints may be delegated to an appropriate person. The outcome of the complaint will be communicated in writing.

### 1.3 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and / or government guidance
- As a result of any other significant change or event
- In the event that the policy is determined not to be effective

If there are urgent concerns these should be raised by the Head Teacher in the first instance for them to determine whether a review of the policy is required in advance of the review date.

## 2. Key principles

The school will keep an admission register and attendance register. The contents of which includes all students, their personal details, the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

The school will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and again at the beginning of session 3. On each occasion we will record student attendance using the national codes. Students will not be marked present if they were not in during the period when the register is open. If there are any absences, then we will follow these up in order to ascertain the reason and record the absence using the correct code on the register.

School gates open at 8.40am. Children come in and make their way to their classes. The school day starts at 8:50 am. All students should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are marked by 8.51am. Students will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in their classroom by 8:50.

The register closes at 9:00. Students will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark (U code).

Students who are late, arriving (after 8:51am), need to report to reception and sign in stating the reason they are late.

## 2.1 Definitions

A student is classed as absent if they arrival at the school after the register has closed or if they do not attend for any reason.

An authorised absence is:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the school day for which the School has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency for which the school has granted leave.

An unauthorised absence is defined as:

- Parents keeping children from attending the School unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at the school after the register has closed
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Leaving the school for no reason during the day

Dover Park defines persistent absenteeism (PA) as missing 10% or more of schooling across the academic year **for whatever reason**.

**Persistent lateness** is defined by Dover Park as students who have 5 or more late marks recorded in one academic year. This may lead to the privilege of the late code (L) being withdrawn and replaced by a 'U' code, which is classed as an unauthorised absence.

## 2.2 Absence procedures

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of a student absence and also to inform us of any changes to contact details.

Parents should telephone the school on 01983 562617 before 8.50am on each day of absence, informing of the reason for absence and when their child is

expected to be returning to school. Parents may also email the office with the reason for absence or complete the appropriate absence form on the website. Parents are required to send a letter of explanation of absence when their child returns to school.

In the case of the absence of a child in a family receiving support from Social Services, or if the school have concerns over the safety of a child, the office will notify the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or their deputies) before and contact will be attempted by 9.30am.

### Appointments

As far as possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school prior to the appointment. Students must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible. If the appointment requires the student to leave during the day, they must be signed out by an adult listed on the student's record.

Students should report to reception and sign out and sign back in when they return.

### Religious observations

Parents must inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. The school will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made.

### Term time leave

We require parents to observe the term times of Dover Park Primary School. The head Teacher will only authorise leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. If the Head Teacher grants a leave request, we will determine the length of time that the student can be away from school.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a student's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence

- Where a student's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason

If term time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and legal action may be considered.

### **Fixed/Truancy Penalty Notices -**

Fixed Penalty Notices were introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. They give the E&I Service, Head Teacher and the Police the power to apply for a notice in cases of persistent truancy or unauthorised absences of a pupil. In addition, they can be applied for when pupils excluded from school are found in a public place without reasonable justification.

Fixed Penalty fines are £120 (reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days) and are issued to each parent/carer within the child's home. If the fixed penalty remains unpaid after 35 days, the parent will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of Education Act 1996.

Dover Park Primary School works closely with the Education & Inclusion Service and in cases where a child has unauthorised absences on their attendance record these will be discussed with the E&I Service and an action agreed in relation to those absences. The E&I Service state:

"Parents need to be aware that a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 can, under the aggravated offence, lead to a fine of up to £2500, a possibility of up to 3 months' imprisonment and a Parenting Order may also be imposed.

Alternatively, the Local Authority may decide to issue parents with a Truancy Penalty Notice of up to £120, or apply for an Education Supervision Order under the 1989 Children's Act."

### **2.3 Intervention**

Dover Park recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year and work very closely with our Education Inclusion Officer (Having fortnightly meetings). We recognise that certain groups of students may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.

The school's attendance target is 100%. Details of our absence levels can be found on the school's web site. Letters of concern regarding attendance may be sent at any time if attendance or if lateness become a cause for concern.

In the case of repeated absence, the school will arrange for parents to speak to school staff regarding those absences. The attendance and absences of all students is monitored and the Education and Inclusion Service will be informed. If a case is referred to the Education and Inclusion Service, they will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Education and Inclusion Service has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

When a student's attendance reaches a cause for concern, a stage 1 letter is sent out outlining the support that is available to them to ensure good attendance ([appendix A, absence stage 1](#)). If there are still concerns, a further invite will be sent inviting parents in to the school for a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) ([appendix B, SAM](#)). It may become necessary for the Pastoral Team to become involved in a supportive capacity to promote improved attendance.

If a case is referred to the Education and Inclusion Service, they will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Education and Inclusion Service has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

Late Process:

Dover Park will trigger a Late Monitoring process if students are late to school more than 5 times in a half term.

Parents will be notified by text for each day a student is late (minutes late communicated). If there is no improvement, this will trigger the lateness process ([appendix C, late letter, stage 1](#)).

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A - Absence Stage 1

Ref: Absence stage 1

Dear **parents name**,

Re: Child's name

**Child's name's** attendance has fallen to -----% which is below the school target of 97%.

At Dover Park Primary School, we consider regular attendance extremely important and any missed time can have a detrimental effect on your child and their future life chances. Support and guidance is available if you wish to discuss this but in legal terms it is the duty of the parent/carer to ensure satisfactory attendance at school.

**Child's name's** attendance will be monitored by the school over the next few weeks and if there is not a significant improvement in attendance you will be invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss this matter with the Education Welfare and Inclusion Officer.

Please remember that as well as phoning school on the days when your child is absent you also need to follow this up in writing by either a letter, email or completing our online form confirming why your child is/was absent. I have enclosed absence slips, for the unknown absences for you to complete and return to the school office.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or require support in improving your child's attendance, please contact me directly on the number above.

Yours sincerely

J. Kirby  
Headteacher

Appendix B - SAM Letter

Ref: SAM

Dear parents name,

Re: Child's name

Child's name's attendance has fallen to -----% which is below the school target of 97%.

You are now invited to attend a meeting at the school on Date to discuss your child's attendance and ensure they achieve their full potential.

If you are unable to attend this appointment, please contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely

J. Kirby  
Headteacher

## Appendix C - Late letter stage 1

Ref: Late Stage 1

Dear **parents name**,

Re: **Child's name**

**Child's name's** has been late / truant after school register closes on **----** occasions and has **---** unauthorised absences since **-----**. **Child's name** attendance is now **---**% which is well below the school target of 97%. Minutes late amount to **???**, this is the equivalent of **???** reading lessons missed.

At Dover Park Primary School, we consider regular attendance extremely important and any missed time can have a detrimental effect on your child and their future life chances. Support and guidance is available if you wish to discuss this but in legal terms it is a duty of the parent/carer to ensure satisfactory attendance at school.

The school operates a 3 stage process to manage absence from school and will review **child's name** in two weeks' time. If there is not a significant improvement in attendance at this time you may be liable for further steps to be taken by the school in order to secure regular attendance.

Yours sincerely

J. Kirby  
Headteacher