

Attendance and Truancy Policy

Date	Review Date	Endorsed by	Approved by	Link Governor
Dec 2016	Dec 2017	Curriculum and Community Committee	Governing Body	Makaila McKenzie

We at The Devonshire Hill Nursery and Primary School believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Truancy at this school is rare, however, we believe truancy is a matter that we treat very seriously as we feel pupils are not only losing valuable learning time but they are putting themselves at serious risk as the school and their parents are not aware of their whereabouts.

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for pupils and their families in order promote good pupil attendance and to reduce truancy.

The school will not authorise for any holiday to be taken during term time.

We wish to work closely with the House Captains and House Representatives to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure attendance meets and aims to exceed Government and Local Authority targets;
- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm;

- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school;
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school;
- To have in place procedures to prevent truancy;
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

The law relating to attendance

Section 7 of The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations came into force on 1 September 2013 and reduced the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions. If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents/ carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the School has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence;
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request and when a child is late after the register has closed.

Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

Please note that your child will risk being removed from the School Roll for consecutive unauthorised absences of 20 days.

Expectations

To ensure that children are in School for the maximum number of days. Our expectations are that:

- Your child is in school at 8:45am every day for an 8:55am start;
- Ensure that children in Reception, KS1 & KS2 are in class ready for learning by the start of every School day at 8:55 am;
- To inform School on every day of any absence;
- To request leave as far in advance as possible;
- To make applications for leave in writing on the School's Leave of Absence Form giving the reason for the request;
- To work with the School and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to improve lateness and attendance;
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the School day.

The Devonshire Hill Nursery and Primary School must:

- Maintain appropriate attendance data;
- Have appropriate registration processes in place;
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: **initially with a first-day absence** telephone call, parent mail or text message;
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences;
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness;
- To report to the EWO and support their work with pupils as necessary;
- To report to Governors and the Local Authority on attendance;
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure;
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions;
- To promote good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.

The Monitoring Process

Attendance

Absences and Lateness are logged by the School. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the school year for **whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to your child's educational prospects and we need the parent/carer fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parent/carer will be informed immediately. Pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we combine academic monitoring where absence affects **attainment using our PA three tier framework noted below.**

- **Stage 1:** The School monitors attendance on a regular basis and identifies any pupil(s) whose attendance causes concern. The School will formally write to advise parents/carers as part of our commitment to improving the attainment of pupils;
- **Stage 2:** If the concerns persist and attendance falls below **95%**, the school will write advising the parent that unless attendance improves within two weeks, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for absence and the supportive measures which will be given by the school with the aim of improving attendance;
- **Stage 3:** If the concerns persist and attendance reaches **90%** the School will make a formal referral to the Educational Welfare Service (**Vision for Schools and Educations (VSE)**) to deal with the on-going issues. Should concerns persist the EWO will agree action and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. **Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action.**

Absences during Term time – (only in exceptional circumstances)

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made two weeks in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed '**Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time**'. These may be obtained from the School Office. Each application must be supported with documented evidence.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

There are approximately 195 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. **Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period. There is no automatic entitlement in Law to time off in term time to go on holiday Unauthorised leave taken in term time may result in the issuing of a fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution.**

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence.

Children in Reception, KS1 & KS2 must be in class by 8.55 am each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. The school gates, will be secured and all gates shut and locked by 9 am. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered as being late. At 9.30 the registers will be closed.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site but this will not count as being present and will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If the problem persists you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence if this is evidenced with documentation- appointment card or similar. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

The School promotes early intervention to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle lateness. The process is:

- If a child is late for school twice or more in a week - a letter will be sent to parents;
- Two letters and the parent/carer will be asked to attend a Late Clinic at School (**Appendix E**);
- If the problem persists, the parent/carer will be asked to attend a meeting with the Assistant Head Teacher (**Appendix F and G**);
- If the problem persists, the parent/carer will be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher.

Parents should note that Governors have implemented a policy to levy a fine to parents/carers for late arrival or pick up of children from School. Please see the charging and Remissions Policy.

Sickness

Parents/Carers must notify The School on each day of absence. The Headteacher reserves the right to request a doctor's /consultant letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

Promoting Good Attendance

At The Devonshire Hill Nursery and Primary School, we celebrate good attendance by:

- Displaying individual class attendance in each classroom so that our children can be helped to self-monitor their own attendance record;
- Recognise in School Assemblies the class with the highest attendance for the previous week;
- Award a joint Certificate of Achievement to parent/carer and child for 100% attendance for each term;
- Award a joint Certificate of Achievement to parent/carer and child for attendance for the most improved attendance each term;
- Arrange a prize draw (two prizes KS1 and KS2) at the end of the academic year for children who have achieved 100% attendance for the whole academic year – September to July;
- Termly attendance ‘treat’ for winning class for children who have achieved a minimum of 97% attendance;
- 100% Certificates and badges for child at the end of the academic year.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

The Governing Body will:

- Delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- Comply with pupil registration regulations;
- Ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
- Set the attendance targets for the year;
- Ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- Monitor termly progress towards these targets;
- Responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- Nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- Responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- Responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- Responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- The responsibility of involving the School Council in the development, approval, implementation and review of this policy;
- Make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- Nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher and the First Day Contact Supervisor and to report back to the Governing Body;
- Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

The Headteacher will:

- Work with the School Council to develop this policy;
- Ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- Undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the First Day Contact Supervisor by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- Monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees;
- Monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- Send to parents at the end of each half term a detailed attendance report on their child;
- Target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- Agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- Work closely with the Education Welfare Service;
- Attend termly meetings with the EWO;
- Have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- Report to the Governing Body every term attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets;
- Remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- Meet with parents if they have applied for a holiday during school time;
- Promote the importance of attendance during collective worship;

- Publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- Award good attendance badges to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance;
- Introduce rewards and incentives to encourage punctuality;
- Organise home tuition with the local support services for pupils with long term illness provided they are well enough to undertake the work;
- Organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- Improve teaching in order to improve pupil engagement;
- Work closely with the link governor and Pastoral Team;
- Strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families;
- Provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- Provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - Monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data
 - Achieving results above the national average
 - Looking at results from parent, pupil and school personnel questionnaires
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

The office personnel are responsible for:

- Implementing the policy with the Headteacher;
- Monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- Keeping the Head informed of attendance figures and trends;
- Contacting parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance;
- Organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their child's poor attendance;
- Organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their child's truancy;
- Organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their application for a term time holiday;
- Compiling attendance data reports for the Head, the Governing Body and the EWO;
- Ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date

The First Day Contact Supervisor is responsible for:

- Contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 10.00a.m.;
- Sending a letter if no contact is made;
- Continuing to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made;
- Contacting the key worker if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
- Informing the Head of trends in absence

The Education Welfare Service Provider will:

- Appoint Education Welfare Officers (EWO) who will promote good attendance in schools;
- Establish effective working relationships with schools;
- Ensure pupils attend school regularly;
- Investigate reasons for a pupil's poor attendance;
- Provide support for children and their families;
- Work with disaffected pupils;
- Work with pupils who may be excluded;
- Find alternative educational provision for excluded pupils;
- Support schools at Single Agency Referral meetings;

The Education Welfare Officer supports the School, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence.”

Haringey Council, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Headteacher can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- At least 20 sessions (equivalent to 10 school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, in the previous 6 school weeks;
- Other than in specific circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15-day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning;
- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year. Fixed Penalty Notices will be charged at £60 per parent per child.

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- Issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence;
- Issue a Penalty Notice without warning.

For further information on legal action to enforce School attendance. Please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>.

School personnel will:

- Comply with and implement this policy;
- Be aware of all other linked policies;
- Set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- Ensure that registers are taken at the appropriate times and are accurate and up to date;
- Be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- Inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- Emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with pupils and parents;
- Discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations

The Link Governor will:

- Work closely with the Headteacher and the coordinator;
- Ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
- Ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- Attend training related to this policy;
- Report to the Governing Body every term;
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Parents are responsible for:

- Complying with this policy;
- Ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- Informing the school on the first day of absence;
- Informing the school of any changes to their contact details;
- Collecting their children on time

- Taking part periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- Not taking holidays in term time;
- Supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent for not ensuring their child attends school regularly or may issue or apply for:

- Penalty Notice;
- Education Supervision Order
- Parenting Order
- School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- Provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes
- Analyse attendance patterns in order to improve pupil attendance especially those from vulnerable groups
- Make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve pupil attendance
- Try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools
- Share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities

The House Captains and House Representatives will be involved in:

- Discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
- Organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Governing Body

Pupils are responsible for:

- Being aware of the school attendance and truancy policy;
- Arriving at school on time;
- Knowing the value of good attendance;
- Knowing the seriousness of truancy, attending classes during the school day and not playing truant;
- Accepting sanctions if they are caught playing truant;
- Returning to school after a period of illness;
- Support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- Liaise with the House Captains;
- Take part in questionnaires and surveys

Dealing with Trends in Attendance

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- Parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Headteacher and EWO to explain their child's repeated absence.
- Support will be given if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement, then the EWO will take the appropriate action.

Dealing with Lateness

The office personnel monitor lateness and inform:

- The Headteacher of patterns of lateness;
- Parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

Dealing with Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant, then the school will immediately inform:

- The police;
- The parent/carer.

All truants will receive:

- Sanctions;
- Support;
- Discussions with the EWO to understand the seriousness of the matter;
- A programme of monitoring and support

The Police must be informed immediately if a pupil leaves school without prior permission.

Absence

Holidays during term time – parents are encouraged to take a family holiday not in term time. Leave of absence only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Parents are asked to complete a holiday form requesting permission to take their child on holiday (**Appendix A**)

Religious Observance – a maximum of three days' absence is allowed for religious observance.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- The school website
- The Staff Handbook
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- School events
- Meetings with school personnel
- Communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- Reports such annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body
- Information displays in the main school entrance

Training

All school personnel:

- Have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- Receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
 - The importance of good attendance and punctuality
 - All aspects of this policy
 - The use and understanding of attendance codes
 - Authorised and unauthorised attendance
 - Looking at trends and patterns
 - Bullying

- The needs of vulnerable groups
- Receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- Receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the link governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.

This policy was reviewed and endorsed by the Full Governing Body of The Devonshire Hill Nursery and Primary School on Tuesday 20th December 2016.