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1. Aims

The governors and staff at Devonshire Primary School recognise that good attendance gives our children the best possible opportunity for learning and reaching their full potential. We expect 100% attendance and 100% punctuality from all pupils. We support pupils and their parents/carers to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. We are continuously working towards our target of 96%+ attendance for all children. We are committed to meeting our obligation through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The designated governor responsible for attendance is Miss E Catling and they can be contacted via the school office or by email at attendance@devonshire.sutton.sch.uk.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Overview of the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Authorising the issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring processes
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the senior leadership team and governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Analysis of whole school data including groups
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Working with The Education Welfare Officer to track persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Agreeing targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs M Elsey and can be contacted via the school office or by email at attendance@devonshire.sutton.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring the accuracy of the school register
- Liaising with the strategic lead for attendance to identify pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees
- Liaising with families when term time absence is requested
- Ensuring medical evidence is produced when required for specific pupils
- Advising the headteacher when to issue a referral for a penalty notice

The attendance officer is Miss S Norman and can be contacted via the school office or by email at attendance@devonshire.sutton.sch.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office before 9.00am.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Monitor the attendance email address and record any messages on the school system
- Signpost parents to the school's family support worker in order to provide them with more detailed support and guidance on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report their child's absence before 9.15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return. Absence can be reported via:
 - The school's website <https://www.devonshireprimary.org/absence-from-school-1/>;
 - Email attendance@devonshire.sutton.sch.uk or
 - By contacting the school office 020 8643 1174 and selecting option 1
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- To aim for 100% attendance
- To be on time to school
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Take pride in their attendance and punctuality.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- The appropriate DfE attendance code for the absence and this will determine whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for a minimum of 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.05pm for Key Stage 1 and 1.35pm for Key Stage 2.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

To report an absence parents/carers can call the school office and choose option 1 from the selection; or alternatively they can email attendance@devonshire.sutton.sch.uk A call or email should be provided for each day of absence, unless the parent advises how long the absence is expected to last.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the level of attendance is a cause for concern, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the requested medical evidence is not provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this by letter.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's level of attendance is not a cause for concern.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If punctuality becomes a cause for concern the parent/carer will be contacted initially by letter to advise them of the number of times their child has been late. If there is little or no improvement the

school's family support worker will contact the family to offer advice and support to assist with arriving at school on time.

If punctuality remains a cause for concern the parent will be asked to attend a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion).

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent/carer through Groupcall on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the parent/carer cannot be reached the pupil's emergency contacts may also be contacted
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Group-call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer; Children's Services and/or the police

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance at Parents Evening and through their child's end of year report. Parents will also be informed if their child's absence falls below 92% ~~90%~~.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Holidays during term time

No holidays will be authorised during term time.

It is expected that parents/carers arrange holidays in the school holidays.

If holidays are taken in term time parents/carers are eligible to receive a fixed penalty fine.

5.3 Modified Timetables

On some occasions it may be necessary to alter the times of the school day for individual pupils. Modified timetables need to be set for a specific amount of time and include a review date. Modified timetables must be agreed by the Head or the Assistant Headteacher Inclusion.

5.4 Home visits

The Assistant Headteacher Inclusion will monitor registration reports and may carry out home visits for pupils who have repeated illnesses, or when the school is unable to make contact with a parent regarding unexplained absence.

5.5 Legal sanctions

The school can refer and the local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Parents will receive a letter from the school advising them that they have been referred to the Local Authority for the issuing of a penalty notice.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent, from September 2024, must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Devonshire Primary School celebrates good attendance in a number of ways including:

- > Celebrating good attendance during the weekly merit assembly
- > Each class has a display celebrating their class attendance
- > Each class is given a certificate to celebrate their attendance
- > Regular communication with parents about their child's attendance
- > The school's monthly newsletter, the Devonshire Dispatch, emphasises the importance of good attendance and includes the number of pupils who have attendance at 100%
- > Informing parents where attendance is dropping including sign posting potential support
- > Signposting parents/carers to the school's Family Support Worker

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level which is discussed with senior leaders and shared with teachers as part of their phase meeting
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

When a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern, parents will be sent a letter detailing the level of attendance and signposting them to avenues of support. If there is no improvement in attendance, the School may refer the matter to the EWO, who works in partnership with school and parents to support pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis. Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and if they fail to do so, may commit an offense under Sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act, 1996.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Send a letter informing them of the necessity to improve
- Monitor the pupils who have been issued with this letter. If attendance continues to fall parents will be advised of the need to provide medical evidence for future absences
- For pupils where medical evidence is required, consider a referral to the Borough Attendance Service if attendance continues to fall
- Send letters to parents/carers if attendance has fallen below 90% 92%.
- Send letters to parents/carers if attendance continues to fall below 90%

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Assistant Headteacher Inclusion. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance, effective from the 19th August 2024. Please note that these may change.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	Pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised by or on behalf of the school, supervised by a member of school staff.
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. School cannot approve a leave of absence retrospectively.
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school. School cannot approve a leave of absence retrospectively.
N	Reason not provided not yet established	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after 5 Days)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence or where no reason for absence is established,
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil is subject to a part time timetable	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Y2	Widespread travel disruption	Pupils unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unexpected partial school closure	Pupils unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unexpected whole school closure	Pupils unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Y6	Public Health or Law	Pupil unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unavoidable emergency	Pupil unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day