



Doxey Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy creation	March 2017
Policy lead	Claire Jones Inclusion Manager/SENCo
Date of Policy adoption by Governing body	April 2017
Frequency of review	Every 2 Years
Review due	April 2019

Doxey Primary School

Attendance Policy

Principles:

Doxey Primary School believes that every child has the right to a full time education and will endeavour to ensure that every child who attends this school will receive their full entitlement by working in partnership with parents and carers and other services.

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately.

All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. We as a school have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Workers.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

- The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. February 22nd 2015 Department of Education). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.
- The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.
- For example, at the end of the 2012/13 Academic year 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90% only 75% of pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.
- The same pattern is also seen at primary school level, where pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence.

School Responsibilities:

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

Admissions Register:

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;

- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

Religious Observance:

The Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 Section 2 states that absence for religious observance should be “treated as authorised [absence] ... on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body which the parent belongs”. Thus, if the parent’s religious body marks the day as a religious festival, the school will authorise the absence. Leave for pupils for religious observance should only be agreed if the dates fall outside of normal holiday periods.

Elective Home Education:

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk of the decision to remove the child’s name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Attendance Register

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day which shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either; AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Definition of persistent absence:

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around 10% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period.

Persons responsible for attendance matters

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- The inclusion manager and office administrator (attendance officer) will monitor attendance on a half termly basis and take appropriate action if a child's attendance falls below given thresholds, paying regard to any ongoing safeguarding matters.
- Parents should discuss with their child's class teacher, in the first instance, about any issues that may arise which could affect their child's attendance. The matter will be followed up by the Head Teacher or Inclusion Manager if required. Please also refer to our Behaviour and Bullying Policies.

Monitoring Attendance

The Inclusion Manager and office administrator meet on a half termly basis to monitor the attendance of individual pupils on a case by case basis taking into account extenuating circumstances.

The following actions are taken if attendance drops below thresholds set by the leadership of the school.

1. Attendance between 90% and 95% in a half term – parents are sent letter 1 which highlights to parents the fall in attendance below 95%
2. Attendance drops below 90% or no improvement in attendance over a term – parents are sent letter 2 which highlights the importance of good attendance and requires parents to produce medical evidence in order for any future absences to be authorised.
3. If there continues to be little or no improvement in attendance then the following actions may be considered:
 - a. Invitation to an attendance briefing led by the inclusion manager and office administrator
 - b. An informal meeting with the EWW
 - c. Referral to EWW. This referral may lead to a parent or carer being fined by the Local Authority.
 - d.

The importance of active parental engagement is recognised in addressing attendance issues and Doxey Primary School seek to resolve attendance issues directly with the parents or carers of a child without the involvement of the Education Welfare Workers.

Holiday Leave

Requests for leave of absence for a holiday should be made using the appropriate form available from the school office no less than two weeks before the start of the requested period of leave. In line with the latest guidance from the DfE (School Attendance, 2016) the decision whether or not to grant permission for a leave of absence for a holiday is entirely at the headteachers discretion and can only be granted in exceptional circumstance. If the request is not received before the holiday is taken permission will not be granted retrospectively.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Legal Framework:

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010

Other documents

DfE 2016: School Attendance; guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed	Charles Soutar
Position	Chair of Governors

Appendix 1

School attendance data and targets

State Funded Primary Schools Two terms data (Autumn 2013 and Spring 2014)

	England	Staffordshire	School	Target 2015-16
Overall attendance %	96.1	96.3	96.4%	98%
Authorised absence (%)	3.2	3.2	2.48%	2%
Unauthorised absence (%)	0.7	0.5	1.13%	0%
Persistent Absence % (based on 15 % absence)	2.8	2.4	0.02%	0%
Attendance of 4 year olds	94.7	95.3		96%

Appendix 2

School Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual Absences:

If a child is absent

If your child is absent from school please telephone the school office between 8.30-9.30 am on the day of absence. For the safety of your child we need to know the reason why your child is off school. This needs to be a specific reason with sufficient detail to enable us to judge whether or not to authorise the absence.

The class teacher will record the absence in the register. If the school office has not been informed of the child's absence we will contact a parent or guardian.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, for example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will immediately contact the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Medical appointments

In order not to disrupt your child's education we ask that any medical appointments are made after the school day where possible. If this is not possible we ask that as long as your child is well, they return to school as soon as possible after the appointment. If the appointment is local the child should be away from school for no longer than two hours.

Please supply a letter or appointment card to verify the appointment.

Lateness

The start of the school day begins with the school bell at 8.45 a.m. when children enter the school from the playground, followed by official registration at 8.55. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as late. Children who are persistently late will be monitored by the EWS.

The register closes at 9.15; any child who arrives in school after that time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence in the register even though they are in school.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event.

We expect parents to contact the school at least two weeks in advance and normally this request will be treated as holiday leave. The headteacher can only grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis and will take into consideration the child's attendance throughout the rest of the school year.

Parental requests must be in writing to the Headteacher with whom the final decision rests.

Long-term absence

Our school will follow the Staffordshire protocol for children unable to access education due to medical reasons. We will liaise with support services to support pupils with their education provision.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 95% in any term without good reason, a referral to the EWS will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Rewards for good attendance

Good attendance will be celebrated and recognised in school in the following ways:

- Weekly whole class attendance: this will be announced in celebration assembly on Monday afternoons, the class with the best attendance will look after the Doxey robin for the remaining week. Results will be published in the newsletter.
- Any child who has 100% attendance for a whole term will receive a small reward in a special assembly at the end of term.
- Any family who has a combined attendance for a whole term of more than 98% will be entered into a raffle and winners will be drawn in the special assembly.