

# Drakelow Park Flying High Academy



## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

### Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Regular and punctual school attendance is crucial for children to make friendships with other children, adapt to routines and to maximise their learning potential. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Drakelow Park fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 98% attendance for all children, with some exceptions (eg. Significant health conditions)
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy is applied to ALL Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age and getting our children school ready.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the local Multi-Agency Team so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

## Definitions

### Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

*Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.*

### Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

## Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:



### Graduated Response to Attendance

| Tier 1 Universal Offer   | Tier 2 Individualised Strategies<br>At risk of PA 91–95%  | Tier 3 High Needs Strategies<br>90% or below   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Role of Teachers and School</b>   | <b>Role of Teachers and School</b>  | <b>Role of Teachers and School</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance policy reviewed annually and shared with all stakeholders</li> <li>Attendance recognition assemblies and class recognition awards</li> <li>Positive attendance shared and promoted on class dojo and social media</li> <li>Meet and greet all children positively and build genuine caring relationships with all children and adults</li> <li>Transitions into school carefully considered for children and parents</li> <li>Registers are led by class teacher and attendance is monitored</li> <li>Positive attendance shared and promoted on class dojo and social media</li> <li>Promoting attendance display in school hall, which is used as teaching aid during assemblies</li> <li>Teachers deliver Learning for Life curriculum including aspects of mental health, community and relationships</li> <li>Deliver academic and pastoral interventions for identified children and families in line with provision maps as informed by Pupil progress meetings</li> <li>Absent child with no reason, day 1 absence procedure begins</li> <li>Home visit/well-being visits (where applicable)</li> <li>Monitoring of whole school cohort trends through weekly tracking</li> <li>Weekly attendance tracked and % addressed as part of weekly monitoring of persistent absence</li> <li>Graduated approach to letters with persistent absence and declining attendance (letter 1, letter 2, letter 3)</li> <li>Wider agencies signposted for parents (where applicable)</li> <li>Lead parent workshop promoting strong attendance</li> <li>Teachers share attendance report as part of parent evening</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily, weekly, half termly and termly monitoring of attendance to identify trends or patterns</li> <li>Proactively use data to identify children who are at risk of persistent absence</li> <li>Continue to identify children with falling attendance through daily registers</li> <li>Work with each identified child and family to understand and address reasons for absence, identifying potential barriers to attendance:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter 1 issued to advise of attendance continuing to fall below 95% and possible initial attendance review</li> <li>Attendance review over phone initiated at 93% to identify barriers and provide support (with 4 week follow up)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Monitor progress and follow up on celebrating achievements with the families (recognition of attendance)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily, weekly, half termly and termly monitoring of attendance % to recognise attendance and identify any trends or patterns</li> <li>Monitor progress, assess and adapt strategies where appropriate               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter 2 issued to advise of attendance dropping below 90% and further attendance review</li> <li>Invite to formal support meeting conducted by HT and formal support plan written with families, where appropriate</li> </ul> </li> <li>Take an active part in multi-agency approach with local authority and other external partners through formalised Team around the Family meetings</li> <li>Use data driven information to identify children at risk of severe absence</li> <li>Apply Derbyshire Local Authority Escalation processes where appropriate in consultation with the Inclusion Support Advisory Teacher (ISAT)</li> <li>Provide interventions to support children where needed</li> <li>Continuously assess and adapt strategies and follow up on celebrating achievements with the families (recognition of attendance)</li> </ol> |
| <b>Role of Parents and Carers</b>  | <b>Role of Parents and Carers</b>   | <b>Role of Parents and Carers</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work alongside school staff to ensure the child is attending school regularly and on time</li> <li>Support school to continue to build strong attendance and punctuality</li> <li>Work in collaboration with school staff to ensure positive transitions at drop off and pickup times</li> <li>Attend attendance workshop at beginning of each academic year and to support the implementation of the school Attendance Policy</li> <li>Engage with school communication including half termly newsletters, attendance celebration, expectations as well as social media/dojo weekly updates</li> <li>Work with staff to understand and support any concerns your child may have</li> <li>Communicate effectively with school regarding any absence providing evidence where required</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with school to identify barriers and/or challenges</li> <li>Proactively engage with support provided by school</li> <li>Continue to communicate with school effectively regarding absence providing evidence where required</li> <li>Celebrate improvements in attendance with family.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with school to continue to identify barriers and/or challenges to attendance</li> <li>Respond to communications with school and proactively engage with school support and external support, including formal plans</li> <li>Take an active role in resourcing additional support</li> <li>Celebrate improvements in attendance with family.</li> </ul>  |

| Role of External Agencies  | Role of External Agencies   | Role of External Agencies  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Derbyshire Inclusion Support Team to review Attendance Policy in practise</li> <li>Support the implementation of the Attendance and other Inclusion related policies which encompasses both attendance and mental health</li> <li>Collaborate with school on attendance initiatives such as contributing to Attendance Workshops and Parents evenings</li> <li>Support school to signpost parents to suitable agencies, where applicable</li> <li>Support school to utilise agencies that can support strong attendance in school</li> <li>Provide pastoral support to the school in line with school's graduated response</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signpost to appropriate agency support, where applicable</li> <li>Support a comprehensive and inclusive school-wide approach that encompasses both attendance and emotional well-being</li> <li>Where there are out of school barriers, provide access to services and signpost to support.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide professional development and early intervention to support school</li> <li>Support the formal TAF process and review meetings</li> <li>Signpost or provide access to services according to identified barriers</li> <li>Support the school with Derbyshire Local Authority Escalation procedures, where appropriate.</li> </ul> |
| Role of Children   | Role of Children  | Role of Children   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend school regularly, be punctual and engage positively in all areas of school life</li> <li>Support other children to be positive members of Drakelow Park</li> <li>Celebrate the achievements of other children both in and out of celebration assemblies</li> <li>Speak to a trusted adult in school if you have any worries or concerns</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-construct and participate in any targeted interventions, where applicable</li> <li>Recognise personal achievements</li> <li>Continue to talk to an adult when/if there is a concern</li> <li>Continue to engage in all aspects of school life</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively engage in a range of interventions</li> <li>Recognise personal achievements</li> <li>Continue to engage in all aspects of school life</li> <li>Continue to talk to an adult when/if you have a concern</li> </ul>  |

## Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Our School Attendance Champion is Mrs Stephanie Beardmore, the headteacher, who also holds overall responsibility for attendance.

### Class teacher

Accurately completing registers

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing Stephanie Beardmore- Headteacher, where there are safeguarding concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Maintaining positive lines of communication and professionally challenging attendance and punctuality where appropriate.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted on the register
- Discussing attendance issues at parents evenings where necessary

### Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the local multi-agency team, via Starting Point
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's link worker from the multi-agency team
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### **Administration staff**

Administration staff are responsible for:

Collating and recording registration and attendance information.

- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- First day response – contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home on Arbor (including minutes late and given reason).
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance in line with DCC flowchart/protocols

### **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness, attendance at a medical appointment or other unavoidable cause.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. (For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require an appointment card or letter from the doctor or dentist).
- Making requests for absence in term time, including holidays, only in exceptional circumstances as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

### **Registration**

The school doors open at 8.30am and children are expected to be in school by 8.45am this gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start. Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. All attendance records are documented using Arbor. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### **Lateness**

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 8.45am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making. Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 8.45am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

### **Persistent Lateness**

At Drakelow Park, we consider persistent lateness as being late twice a week or more on average. Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning and their late arrival disrupts the class. This is not fair on them, other children in their class or the class teacher as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. Remember, we are here to help. If you are finding the mornings challenging in getting to school on time, please discuss this with our Attendance Champion Mrs Beardmore or your child's class teacher. We identify persistent lateness each week by monitoring attendance closely. If we notice patterns of lateness, we will contact you to offer support in getting to school on time and offer a Persistent Lateness review with you.

### **Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence.

This should be done in the following way:

1. Calling the School Office on ..... and reporting the reason for absence. You may be asked for medical evidence.
2. Leave a message if the call is not answered and this will be picked up from 8.45am by a member of staff in the office.

Please avoid sending messages via Dojo to class teachers informing them of absences as staff members are preparing the classroom and their lessons for the day prior to 8.30am and will not always be able to access Dojo and read this message.

When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. All absences are recorded on the register as either authorised or unauthorised. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used by the Headteacher to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where a child has been absent without explanation we send a letter requesting the reason for absence to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

## **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone. If we cannot get hold over you via text message or phone, a home visit may be conducted. This is to fulfil our statutory safeguarding duty of care.

## **Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time**

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of absence form available from the school office and handed in **3** school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school. Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

**Drakelow Park expects attendance of at least 97% for your child.**

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

There are lots of ways that we can support you with addressing attendance concerns. As a school we prioritise attendance to ensure that our children get the best start to their school career and our teaching staff are on hand at the start and the end of the day to discuss any issues you may be having with attendance. Similarly, we have great links with local agencies that can support you as a family with raising attendance and supporting you in ensuring your children are in school and on time daily. We also offer fantastic nurture provision at school to support your child with anxiety, confidence, resilience, self-esteem and much more, which we can assign to your child if you communicate with us about these particular needs challenging their attendance. Our aim is to work with you

and we have adopted a graduated response to supporting good attendance, which can be seen in our tiered approach above.

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

### **National framework for penalty notices**

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

The new costs and process is outlined below:

- CONTROLLED First Offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Offence (within 3 years) - The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

### **Term time holidays**

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances. If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to refer the case to the LA. The LA will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold. In every case, the request for the Penalty Notice comes in from the school to the LA for the process to be completed.

### **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

If your response letter to the leave of absence form states that the holiday is not authorised, We expect that the holiday will not be taken/absence from school. However, should you decide to go ahead, it will be an unauthorised absence which may result in a Penalty Notice (a fine) from the County Council. Our school has decided that we will only process the paperwork for Fixed Penalties if the absence exceeds 3 days.

Please note that schools do not receive the funds raised through Penalty Notices.

- On the first day of absence we are required to text or call you about the whereabouts of your child as a matter of course. This is because we cannot presume you are on holiday and require evidence that your child is safe.
- You will receive a further letter from school informing you that, as you have taken the holiday without authorisation, the paperwork for the Fixed Penalty has been processed and passed to the county council. Schools must go ahead with this part of the process for all unauthorised holidays in order to follow the Derbyshire County Council Policy.

To be reviewed September 2026

Signed: S Beardmore (Headteacher)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Beardmore', written in a cursive style.

Date April 2026