



Dove First School Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

This policy is written in accordance with:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Staffordshire County Council Families First Targeted Services
- Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices

A copy of this policy is posted on the school website for parents' information.

1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend, on time, every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2

The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be

classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, looking after other children, haircuts etc., this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. This includes
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
 - Truancy before or during the school day
 - Absences which have never been properly explained
 - A child who arrives too late to get a mark without a good reason
- 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.

3 Involving the Education Welfare Officer

- The Headteacher through regular meetings with EWO will discuss issues surrounding attendance and punctuality.
- If there is cause for concern the following procedures will be followed;
 - The Headteacher will speak to the parents of the child.
 - A letter will be sent home raising the concerns by either the school or the Education Welfare Service as is most appropriate.
 - Parents are invited into school to talk to the Headteacher and the EWO informally.
 - If informal intervention is unsuccessful then an official referral to the EWO will be made by the school.
 - The EWO may visit the home.

Throughout these procedures the Headteacher and the EWO will regularly discuss ongoing cases.

4 Penalty Notices

4.1 Penalty notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

From 1st January 2018 any period of unauthorised leave may result in a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The headteacher will continue to be the only person

able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absences remain on a pupil's record and will be monitored for further action by an Education Welfare Officer. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action from the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school or if their child's school attendance is poor.

4.2 Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. This has now changed to 10 marks, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are, therefore, encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

5 If a child is absent

- 5.1** When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, the office manager will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 5.2** Parents or guardians are requested to report an absence through illness to the school by telephone or note on the first day of absence. If the school have not been informed by 9.30am a telephone call will be made to the home.
- 5.3** A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.
- 5.4** If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- 5.5** When a child's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral will be made to the EWO. 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

6 Requests for leave of absence

- 6.1** New guidance from the government came into force on January 1st 2018. The new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.
- 6.2** Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. As a consequence of these changes **we will no longer be able to approve requests for leave of absence for holidays during term time.**
- 6.3** Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for their child in an exceptional circumstance should complete a form obtainable from the school office and state the intended dates and reason for the request also highlighting the **exceptional circumstances** which should be given in detail. Written applications should be made at least two weeks in advance of the requested date and before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

7 Long-term absence

- 7.1** When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 7.2** If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

8 Rewards for good attendance

- 8.1** All the children who have 96+ per cent attendance in any one year will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the summer term. There are special certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

9 Attendance targets

- 9.1** The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

The school has adopted the following attendance target for 2018-19:

96% attendance

10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 10.2** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 10.3** Class teachers will be 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 headteacher, who will contact the parents.

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. The school has adopted the same procedures as the Uttoxeter Pyramid of School to keep parents updated about their child's attendance.

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

Signed _____ Date _____

Approved by governors - September 2018