



# Devonshire Primary Academy Attendance Policy



Adopted by Governors/HT: HT  
Review period: 1 year  
Last review date: September 2018  
Person responsible for policy: Mrs L Graham

High levels of attendance (at least 95%) and accurate punctuality (in school before 8.55a.m.) are essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life and ensure that learners achieve their potential.

We constantly aim to achieve high attendance by operating an attendance policy within which children, staff, parents and Pupil Welfare Officer work together for the child's sake. We monitor and evaluate the children's attendance and implement quick, early intervention where a concern is identified.

Staff and school explicitly promote and encourage accurate punctuality and high attendance. The Attendance Officer liaises with home and other agencies when issues are identified with the child's attendance or punctuality. The Attendance Officer carries out monthly whole school screening of all children's attendance and punctuality. Strategies for improvement are discussed and action taken when necessary. Relevant staff are informed of actions. Positive and full attendance is seen as an excellent achievement in its own right and is promoted and celebrated as such with public recognition, certificates and prizes.

### **Principles**

School takes responsibility for pupils from **8.45a.m.**, when pupils are able to enter their classrooms and begin good morning work. A child should be in school every day and be in the classroom on time, before **8.55a.m.** Where an absence is required, the parent must provide a reason for the absence, either in writing or verbally to the class teacher or by telephoning school on **478271**.

1. A child should only be absent if the reason is 'unavoidable'. Every absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why the reason for the cause of each absence is always required and will be requested. Absences will not be authorised without good reason!
2. Authorised absences are sessions away from school for a justified reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes. For pupils with less than 95% attendance school will request medical confirmation in order to authorise a child's medical absence. This may be a copy of an appointment card, prescription, letter from WIC etc.
3. Unauthorised absences are those sessions which the school does not consider reasonable or justified and for which no permission has been given. Unauthorised absences include a child having time off for:
  - \* Going shopping
  - \* Minding the house
  - \* Being truant
  - \* Having a birthday
  - \* Excessive holidays
  - \* Having a haircut
  - \* Absences which have never been explained
  - \* Children arriving too late to get a mark – after 9.30a.m.
  - \* Sleeping in
  - \* Other reasons determined to be unacceptable by the Headteacher.Providing a note or message may not be sufficient if the reason given is 'avoidable', i.e. the child could and should have been in school. Prolonged periods of absence through illness will require written medical evidence (in line with Local Authority Pupil Welfare policy.)

4. Some children require encouragement and support to attend very regularly and/or on time. Our policy is to resolve issues in partnership between school, parents and the child. It is never better for parents to cover up an absence or to give in to pressure to excuse him/her from school. This gives the message that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and to work with staff in resolving problems together. Good communication between home and school is essential. Devonshire Primary Academy wants to ensure that all children are part being “the best they can be”.
5. If problems are not resolved, we will refer the child to the Pupil Welfare Officer, who will try to resolve the difficulties by agreement or by a further referral to another agency. However, if strategies to improve the child's attendance and punctuality have failed, penalties and/or court proceedings may be taken to ensure the child's regular attendance and punctuality. It may be deemed necessary to prosecute parents. Parents or children may wish to contact the Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) to ask for advice. The PWO is independent of the school and can be contacted at Bickerstaffe House, Talbot Road, Blackpool, or by telephone, or by appointment in school on a Wednesday morning.

 **Please contact: PWO – KAREN MANNING - 476478**

### **Procedures**

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the academy on the first day, in person or by telephone – 478271. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. a family death) or for medical appointments which are unavoidably in school time, provided that a written explanation or appointment card is produced. The Academy ask that where possible appointments e.g.; medical/dentist are made outside school time.

### **Holidays**

Holidays will not be authorised in term time, unless it is an exceptional circumstance and always at the discretion of the Head Teacher. All holiday requests must be made in writing by the parent looking after the child. Holiday forms are available from the office or the school website.

### **Registration**

Pupils must arrive between 8.45a.m and 8.55a.m. Lessons start promptly at 8.55am. The attendance register is a legal, statutory document which must be maintained at all times by staff. We register pupils at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.

### **Punctuality**

Children are expected to arrive at school on time every day. Children who are persistently late will be dealt with in the same way as pupils with poor attendance.

Texts will be sent to individual parents and whole school text messages will be sent. Letters will be sent home advising parents of minutes late and the frequency of the lateness.

If there is no improvement in a child's lateness, Pupil Welfare service will be involved. School has the option to issue penalty notices to parents/carers for persistent late attendance.

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This currently entails a cost of £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice or £120 if after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of notice.

Failure to pay Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution by Pupil Welfare under Section 444(1) of The Education Act, 1996.

Children arriving between 8.55am – 9.15am, need to be accompanied by a parent or carer to the main school doors, via the gate on Devonshire Road and recorded in the late book.

Registers will be taken promptly at 8.55am by class teacher.

If it is an ongoing absence parents are requested to keep in regular contact with school. School operates a First Day Calling system. If there has been no contact by the parent, school will follow this procedure:-

- Text message to first contact number – text service advises if the message is received. This can be used as evidence if the pupil is referred to the PWO.
- If no response, the first contact is telephoned. All contact numbers are then tried.

Registers are kept in the school office. Reasons as to why a child arrives late will be recorded and parents will be contacted if a concern arises about poor punctuality. Persistent, poor punctuality is not acceptable and may result in the Pupil Welfare Officer being involved to resolve the reasons behind the lateness. Penalties may be implemented by the court officers.

When a child fails to arrive for an afternoon session, it is the class teacher's responsibility to find out the child's whereabouts and inform the office immediately if there is a concern that the child may have left the premises. The Senior Leadership Team will be contacted for further action. A child who leaves the premises without permission will result in the parents being contacted, then the Police.

The Academy asks that parents send a letter with their child on return after absence. If no reason has been received the following procedure is followed:-

- Absence letter ① sent home with child, signed by the class teacher.
- Absence letter ② sent home via post, signed by Assistant Head/SENCO.
- Absence letter ③ from the Head Teacher, sent home in the post.

If after a period of 4 weeks school still has had no response, the Pupil Welfare Service will be informed and the absence will be unauthorised.

### **Special Circumstances**

It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late because of transport difficulties or because of prolonged illness. We will adopt a sympathetic approach in these instances and work with the child and family to help in any way possible. We ask parents to keep the academy informed of any special circumstances which will impact on a child's attendance and punctuality.

### **Rewards**

## Devonshire Primary Academy – Attendance Policy

Devonshire Primary Academy recognises and celebrates good attendance. We celebrate good attendance with different rewards across the academic year.

These can include -

- Attender of the week: - Each week each class teacher draws out a child's name from those with 100% attendance. The child receives a small prize.
- Class attendance: -There is a weekly competition for the best attendance. Results are displayed weekly through ICT at the Star of the Week Assembly.
- There is a display of weekly class attendance figures & winners in the street area.
- The whole school weekly attendance figure and class figure are highlighted on the weekly newsletter – Devonshire Buzz.
- Half termly reward for best class attendance e.g.: DVD & popcorn.
- Participation in Blackpool Football club's 100% attendance party.
- We celebrate 100% attendance and excellent attendance by presenting children with certificates, and pupils who achieve 100% for the full school year receive a prize.

### **Attendance Matters**

Our attendance policy will be published on the school website at the beginning of each school year. It will be reviewed annually in the summer term so that changes, additions and amendments can be made after consultation with all parties in readiness for the new academic year including induction meetings with new parents.