

DATCHET ST.MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY

Attendance Policy 2017

Datchet St Mary's C of E Primary Academy - Attendance Policy

Produced by Admissions Committee

Approved at.....Admissions Committee..... Date.....October 2017.....

Signed.....*Nicola Green*..... Print.....Nicola Green.....

Introduction

Datchet St Mary's Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. As a school we have a zero tolerance of unauthorised absence.

The primary responsibility for ensuring that children and young people attend school rests with their parents/carers. However promoting attendance and tackling absence is the responsibility of schools and agencies within the local authority. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

School attendance is subject to Education law and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there are good reasons for the absence. There are two main categories of absence:

Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification of the absence, or given approval in advance for the absence.

Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence after a parent's request.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness or other circumstances, this may not be automatically

authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into

*consideration and as a result the absence **may not be authorised**.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailment such as headache or cold is not acceptable. Repeated absence will require us to request that you obtain evidence from your doctor's surgery, such as a stamped appointment card or a prescription. Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for this information and will not be liable for the cost.

School Practice

- School starts at 8.50 a.m. Registers are taken at 9.00 a.m.; they are taken again at the start of the afternoon session.
- A child who arrives after the taking of the register is marked as late and the number of minutes they are late is recorded. The number of minutes late each month is monitored.
- A child who arrives after the registers close at 9.15 a.m. is marked as absent in the register.
- Parents/guardians should always telephone the school office on 01753 542982 or send an e-mail if their child is not attending school.
- The Parent and Pupil Liaison Officer will telephone parents on the first morning of an absence if notification has not been received.
- A written explanation must be provided when the child returns to school.
- Registers are checked regularly and where there is an unexplained absence, a written request will be sent for an explanation.
- Termly (short term) analysis of absenteeism will be carried out and letters are sent to parents if attendance falls below expected levels. In an academic year, this level would be 96%.
- If attendance does not improve, parents will be called in to the attendance clinic to discuss the matter with the Headteacher and Educational Welfare Officer this may lead to an attendance plan.
- Further absence will result in referral to the Education Welfare Service and may result in a fine or prosecution.

Lateness

Parents and carers are expected to bring their child to school on time. A child arriving after registration i.e. after 9.00am is disruptive for the class and embarrassing for the child. Vital information is given at the start of the school day and the child's learning may be affected if he/she is not present for the full session. Punctuality is an important life skill. Persistent

lateness will be followed up by the school and may be referred to the Education Welfare service if it continues.

Any pupil arriving late should enter the building through the main entrance and report to the school office. Their name will be entered in the late register with the reason. A member of the office staff will then send the pupil to their classroom.

Parents are not permitted to take their child to the classroom as this disrupts teaching. If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety requirements.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Term Time Leave of Absence

At Datchet St Mary's Academy we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure that your child achieves to their full potential and there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement. However, we recognise that there may be occasions where there are extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such absence and these are the only absences that may be considered under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Parent Action

Parents must request leave as far in advance as possible.

The request must include the reason why it is necessary to take leave during term time.

The request must be made in writing using the *Request for Leave of Absence form* available from the school office.

School Action

On receipt of the request, the absence will be considered by the Headteacher, who will take into account the child's usual attendance and the reason given by the parent.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Educational Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child. AS OF 1st SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS. If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrate's Court, and if provided, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1000 plus costs.

Authorisation will not be given for the following reasons:

- * Availability or cost.
- * Extended holiday at the beginning or end of the term.
- * A term-time booking made in error by the parent or another person.

Any absence that has not been authorised may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and may result in a penalty notice being issued.

There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

The role of the school management

Pupils learn best when parents and staff work in partnership to maximise pupils' attendance at school and everyone is clear of expectations and procedures. We expect that as soon as your child starts their education at Datchet St Marys Academy, you will abide by our attendance policy.

The staff at Datchet St Mary's academy has an obligation to enquire and challenge the reasons for pupils' absences and/or lateness and do insist on written evidence for any such absences. There is also an expectation that the staff report concerns over absence and lateness to the Headteacher.

The school will send letters to parents, guardians or carers as to their child's current attendance level, unexplained absences or lateness or any other concerns.

The school provides parents with their child's percentage attendance every long term in the child's report that is presented at each parents evening.

The school collects information daily and weekly from the registers on absences. This information forwarded to the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

The role of the Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 4 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, failed to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence".

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Headteacher can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:-

- * at least 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, or 20 sessions (10 school days) in the previous four months.
- * other than in specific circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15 day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.
- * no more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year.

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- * issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence
- * issue a Penalty Notice without warning.

The Fast Track framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Fast Track involves engaging the parent in specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 12 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates Court.

Promoting Good Attendance

We celebrate excellent attendance throughout our school, with certificates awarded to individual children who excel in attendance. Assemblies award classes where there is consistent high attendance and the school awards a certificate to the winning class.

What parents can do to help

Please work with the school staff and ensure you are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as this has a huge impact on a pupils learning.

Parents must:

- * not condone your child's absences
- * telephone the school each day that your child is unable to attend school due to illness
- * send a written note to the school when your child returns
- * avoid appointments during the school day.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- * talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- * talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

The role of the Governing Body:

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their school. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Please note that no one has a right to any days out of school. All absences have to be authorised by the Head Teacher in line with this policy.

Datchet St Mary's C of E Primary Academy - Attendance Policy

Produced by Standards Committee

Approved at.....Standards Meeting..... Date.....21st November 2017.....

Signed..... Print.....