



**Independent and Co-educational
Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory School**

**Attendance and Children Missing in Education Policy
(AS015)**

Registered Charity No: 1086829

DEAN CLOSE AIRTHRIE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the EYFS

Aim

Airthrie monitors attendance and works to support families to ensure that it is regular. We also appreciate that children can become unwell, have unavoidable appointments or are absent due to exceptional circumstances.

Punctuality is also important, and parents are encouraged to ensure that children arrive at school in good time for registration each day in order to be ready for their first lesson.

In summary, we believe that excellent attendance and punctuality has a positive impact on children's learning, achievement and social and emotional development, and that it is very challenging to catch up on missed work and learning opportunities.

1. A range of documents, circulars and guidance for good practice govern attendance at Dean Close Airthrie School. Key documents, which inform this policy include:
 - a. *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*
 - b. *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)*
 - c. *The Education (ISS) Regulations (2014)*
 - d. *National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding (2022)*
2. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.
3. Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers, an Admissions register, known as the "School Roll" (held on iSAMS), and an Attendance register. School Inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met. Every entry in the school register must be preserved for at least six years.
4. The Regulations covering school admission and attendance are very prescriptive reflecting the importance that successive Governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and once during the afternoon session. The Regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained.

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5. Policy Statement

For pupils to fully benefit from the educational opportunities provided by Dean Close Airthrie it is vital that high levels of attendance and punctuality are sustained throughout the academic year. Airthrie has an expectation that all pupils will be striving for a culture of 100% attendance and 100% punctuality. Anything below 95% attendance over a term is considered poor and may require further investigation. Poor levels of attendance will negatively impact the personal, social and academic development of the pupil. It may also be an indicator of abuse or neglect or in itself may indicate that a child is at immediate risk of harm. Consequently, the attendance and registration arrangements set out in the document below are hugely important. The school however appreciates that some pupils have specific needs and there may be barriers to them achieving high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Attendance
Excellent (100%) Which gives the very best chance of success.
Good (95-99%) Which may not have an impact on learning.
Poor Attendance (90-94%) Which may have an impact on learning.
Unsatisfactory Attendance (less than 90%) Which has an impact on learning.

6. Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), Airthrie would expect to work together with the parents to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, the SLT will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.
7. Term dates are published over a year in advance on the website in order that parents can arrange holidays and/or travel arrangements to/from School without disrupting a pupil's education. Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.

8. PARENT AND CARERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) Ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness, they should contact the School Office or the class teacher before 8.20am, on each and every day of absence. This may be done by phone, email, or in person.
- b) Not authorise their child's absence. Only the school can do this based on the explanation provided by the parents. Parents need to be aware that their explanation does not in itself authorise an absence. Should a parent fail to provide a satisfactory reason for absence, the school will record such absence as unauthorised.

- c) Wherever possible, avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.
- d) Avoid booking family holidays during term-time.
- e) Co-operate fully with Early help, home visits and phased returns
- f) Ensure that pupils attend school regularly
- g) Ensure that pupils attend school on time (arrive at school in time for 8.40am). If they arrive after registration but before period 1 they will be marked as late. If they arrive after period 1 has begun, they should sign in at the Front Office and an explanation for lateness given.
- h) Requests for planned medical appointments, part days away from School should be sent by email to the class teacher or the school office.
- i) Requests for planned absences of a day or more should be sent in writing to the Head. Please note, family holidays are not classed as exceptional circumstances by the DfE, and therefore are not able to be marked as an authorised absence.

9. SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

As previously mentioned, schools are required by law to take attendance registers twice daily for all pupils of compulsory school age - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Registers are a legal document.

Registration

All pupils are registered electronically twice a day, Monday to Friday:

- Before the start of the first lesson (08:50)
- Immediately after lunch (13:30)

School staff will:

- a) Record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- b) Complete registers in accordance with the School's guidance (Classroom Teachers should only use the / N or U code when completing the registers).
- c) Respond to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care.
- d) Promote regular school attendance.
- e) Acknowledge good or improved attendance of individual pupils
- f) It is also required that the Pastoral Lead will monitor attendance, and will refer to the Head, if there is any cause for concern in pattern or number of absences.

Responsibilities of the school attendance administrator

- g) The Attendance Administrator's essential purposes are to support parents and carers to meet their responsibilities for ensuring that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered and to support school to develop effective systems for managing attendance.
- h) The School Attendance Administrator will:
 - Contact the parents by telephone or email on the first day of the absence.
 - Amend the register – only the Attendance Administrator, or the lead member of SLT will amend Official Registers.

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- Head confirms between authorised and unauthorised absence
- Meet regularly with the Pastoral Lead or Head to discuss the attendance of pupils.
- Monitor and review registers for individuals causing concerns.
- Maintain appropriate records regarding pupil absence.
- Contact staff who have not taken their registers and follow this up with the Pastoral Lead or Head where necessary.
- Mark in those pupils who arrive at school after 8.40 before 9.10am as Late (U). If a pupil arrives after 9.10am allocate an appropriate code.
- Forward all request for leave of absence to the Head.

Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team

- The Pastoral Lead has overall responsibility for monitoring pupil attendance.
- It is expected that they will:
 - Meet with the School Attendance Administrator each half term to discuss the attendance of pupils
 - Ensure that systems are in place to inform the local authority of any pupil absent for ten consecutive unauthorised registration points.
 - Ensure that all attendance data, including the original entry and any amendments are retained for at least six years.
 - Promote partnership between pupils, parents and school over attendance and punctuality
 - Arrange meetings with parents or carers regarding pupil's attendance
 - Investigate the cause of absence and plan strategies with tutors, parents or carers and other agencies
 - Work with the school and parents to improve the attendance of identified pupils.
 - Co-ordinate and plan for the return of long-term absences or truants, liaising with pupils, parents or carers and teachers,.
 - Explain the consequences of poor attendance or punctuality to pupils, parents and carers.
 - Take the necessary steps with individuals with poor attendance, working with parents and, where appropriate, external agencies, including Family Support Liaison workers or the Early Help offer in order to support a pupil's attendance
 - If attendance hasn't improved despite the support offered, or where there has been insufficient engagement from parents, the DSL will be informed for further action. This will involve a series of meetings and an agreed action plan relating to attendance concerns. The Parent Contract will be kept under review. If attendance does not improve and there is insufficient engagement from parents, further action will be taken.

10. MONITORING PROCEDURES

- Accurate registers are important as they help in identifying individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees; facilitate and encourage early intervention; and to identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc). We recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance.
- We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- We recognise that certain groups of pupils may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.

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- d) Attendance percentages need to be interpreted differently dependent on the circumstances of the individual and not be purely a mechanical numerical task.
- e) SLT review attendance termly and will identify those in need of support
- f) Attendance is shared with Trustees and included in the termly Trustee report
- g) Attendance and Punctuality is reported to parents on MySchoolPortal
- h) If we think there is an abnormality in attendance we will contact parents.
- i) Any pupil whose attendance falls below 90% will become a cause for concern and their attendance more closely monitored. They will be classed as a Persistent Absentee (PA) and contact will be made with parents regarding attendance.
- j) The School has agreed to inform the LEA if, for any pupil, unauthorised absences exceed 10% of their total attendance for the year.
- k) The School will also inform the relevant LEA and/or Children's Social Care (CSC), as appropriate, immediately if:
 - A single absence raises child protection concerns (see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)
 - A pupil has four and a half days of unauthorised absence in any six-week period (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence)
 - A pupil of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the school register when the next school is known. In this last case, the School is required to report the circumstances, as soon as possible after the grounds for deletion are met, to the LEA in which the pupil lives and in any event before the pupil's name is deleted from the register.
 - A pupil leaves or starts at the School at a 'non-standard transition point.'

11. Pupils with medical conditions or special educations needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who are on the SEND register. They have the same right to education as all other pupils. Dean Close Airthrie works with parents and other agencies to make reasonable adjustments to support the child.

In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be given a temporary part-time timetable but always with a pathway for that to becoming full time. A part-time timetable will never be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

12. The School Day

- a) All pupils are expected to be in form time by 8.40am Monday to Friday. The normal school day ends from 3.45pm.
- b) There is an expectation that all pupils will have left site by 5.30pm unless specific arrangement have been put in place by the Head.

Leaving the School site

Pupils may not leave the school site during school hours unless accompanied by a parent or guardian or, as part of an organised school activity, in the company of a designated member of teaching staff.

Missing Pupils

A pupil who is not present for registration, or is absent from a lesson, activity etc. is deemed to be a 'missing child'. All members of staff are instructed to report a missing child to the Headt as soon as possible (see **Missing Child Policy** for the procedure to be followed).

Children Missing from Education CME (KCSiE 2023)

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

As per the Children Missing in Education guidance:

'Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.'

APPENDIX 1

Attendance Codes

-  **School Registration Codes**
-  No Reason Yet Provided For Absence [N]
-  Unknown [-]
-  Other [-]
-  Unauthorised Absence [O]
-  Religious Observance [R]
-  Family Holiday (Agreed) [H]
-  Study Leave [S]
-  Excluded [E]
-  Work Experience [W]
-  Educational Visit or Trip [V]
-  Illness [I]
-  Approved Sporting Activity [P]
-  Late (After Registers Closed) [U]
-  Medical / Dental Appointments [M]
-  Interview [J]
-  Family Holiday (NOT Agreed) [G]
-  Extended Family Holiday (Agreed) [F]
-  Educated Off Site [B]
-  Non-Compulsory School Age Absence [X]
-  Other Authorised Circumstances [C]
-  Dual Registration [D]
-  Traveller Absence [T]
-  Exceptional Circumstances [Y]
-  Pupil Not Yet On Roll [Z]
-  School Closed To Pupils [#]