



**Independent, Co-educational, Day and Boarding  
Preparatory School**

**Attendance Policy  
(SJ442)**

Registered Charity No: 1086829

Date of Issue: March 2025  
Review Date: September 2025  
Owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead

## DEAN CLOSE ST JOHN'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. A range of documents, circulars and guidance for good practice govern attendance at Dean Close St John's Preparatory School. Key documents, which inform this policy include:

- a. *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*
- b. *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022)*
- c. *The Education (ISS) Regulations (2014)*
- d. *National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding (2022)*
- e. *Working together to improve school attendance (2024)*

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 a minimum period of three years since the date the entry was made.

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 during the afternoon for all day pupils. The Regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained.

5. Boarding pupils are covered by the Boarding Standards: NMS Standard 20 places a legal requirement upon staff who have boarders in their charge to know their whereabouts at all times. The Missing Child Policy (STJ416) must be referred to if the whereabouts of a pupil is not known.

## **Policy Statement**

For pupils to fully benefit from the educational opportunities provided by Dean Close St John's Preparatory School it is vital that high levels of attendance and punctuality are sustained throughout the academic year. Dean Close St John's Preparatory School has an expectation that all pupils will be striving for a culture of 100% attendance and 100% punctuality. 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.

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), Dean Close St John's Preparatory School 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.

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.

## **Responsibilities of the School**

The School has agreed to inform the LEA if, for any pupil, unauthorised absences exceed 10% of their total attendance for the year. 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 Missing Pupil Policy and 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 not 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.'

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### **Pupils with medical conditions or special education 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 Prep School works with parents and other agencies to make reasonable adjustments to support the child. Working with the pastoral team we will establish strategies to remove any in-school barriers.

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.

### **The School Day**

All pupils are expected to be in registration in their Form Rooms by 8.20am Monday to Friday. The normal school day ends at 4.30pm from Monday to Friday, and after School Clubs for those enrolled.

There is an expectation that all day pupils will have left site by 6.00pm unless specific arrangements have been put in place with the school and Houseparent.

Pupils are registered in the morning at 8.20am and in the afternoon at 1:00pm in their Form Rooms. All pupils are cared for by a Form Tutor. They are responsible for pupils during term time.

It is also required that Form Tutors will monitor attendance, and will refer to the Pastoral Lead, or SLT team as appropriate, if there is any cause for concern in pattern or number of absences.

### **Requesting Absence**

If a pupil is unwell the parent should contact the Form Tutor and/or Front Office before 8.00am each and every day of absence.

- Requests for planned medical appointments should be sent in writing to the Front Office.
- Requests for non-medical planned absences should be sent in writing to the Head.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Registration Procedure and Protocols**

Registration is carried out by the Form Tutor or nominated member of staff at 8.20am and at 1:00pm. Registers will therefore be marked in accordance with the DfE Codes set out in Appendix 2.

An Unauthorised Absence Code will be followed up until a pupil has been accounted for. Staff taking pupils out of Registration for a trip, music lessons etc, must mark them with the correct code in advance of that time, and make changes in real time to reflect any pupils who have not arrived to their activity. Sports coaches who have fixtures which overlap with Registration must provide a team sheet to the Front Office in advance.

Absence codes are clearly shown on iSAMS and staff can only select from the list given.

The Form Tutor will leave a comment/note in iSAMS in the event of absences that are not for a whole session, saying when the pupil is likely to return.

AM and PM Registration will be followed up by the Front Office where pupils are shown as unauthorised.

The process followed by the Front Office is as follows:

- Check Period 1 or Period 5 attendance
- Visit teaching areas
- Check Music / LAMDA lessons
- Ring parents (Day Pupils).

A pupil marked N is a concern; the Form Tutor and Front Office will liaise to resolve or the Missing Pupil Policy may be used.

## APPENDIX 2

### DFE Codes

#### Present Codes

/	Present
A – Health Hub	Used for when a pupil is in the Health Hub (HH) for a short period of time. Doctor's appointments should be recorded as such. If a boarder is ill in the HH/Sick Bay and out of school for the whole day, please record as illness. Boarders ill in house should be recorded as illness.
B – Off-site activity	Used for School trips and off-site activities when the pupils are supervised. <b>Use code V in most instances</b>
D – Dual Registered	Only used in exceptional circumstances, advised by SLT
J – Interview/Open Day	Interviews with employers or a visit to another educational establishment
P – Approved Sporting Activity	This code should only be used for sporting activities ran by the School off-site. Private arrangements for off-site activities must be recorded as authorized absence.
V – Educational Visit or Trip	Used for School trips and off-site activities when the pupils are supervised.
W – Work Experience	

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**Authorised Absence Codes** – these codes are used when the School has given approval for the absence in advance or has accepted an explanation.

I - Illness	
M - Medical/Dental appointments	
C - Leave of absence authorised	A leave of absence request should be made in advance in writing to the Head
E – Excluded	Excluded/suspended
H – Holiday (agreed)	Holidays requested in term-time. A request in writing to the Head
R – Religious Observance	
S – Study Leave	Only to be used for study leave prior to the Summer Public exams – not for trial exams

**Unauthorised Absence Codes**

G – Family holiday (not agreed)	If a previous request has not been made to the Head and agreed
N – No reason for absence provided	If this code is used for any reason, this must be followed up and a reason for the absence established.
O – Unauthorised absence	
U – Arrived in school after registration closed	Use for late arrivals where no valid reason to use the above codes is found.