



DEAN CLOSE
PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL
CHELTENHAM

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

**Attendance Policy
(PP317)**

Registered Charity No: 1086829

1. Aims

This policy aims to achieve high levels of attendance by all pupils, ensuring they can fully access the educational opportunities provided. It is designed to comply with the Department for Education's **Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022)** and other relevant statutory guidance. It sets out the required actions of staff, parents, and pupils and is designed to be fair, consistent, and reflective of safeguarding principles.

2. Attendance Expectations

All pupils are expected to aim for 100% attendance, except in cases of illness or other authorised reasons. The target attendance rate for our school is at least 95%. Persistent absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of school sessions, will trigger early interventions to support pupils and families.

For pupils to fully benefit from the educational opportunities provided by Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School, it is vital that high levels of attendance and punctuality are sustained throughout the academic year. We expect all pupils to strive for 100% attendance and punctuality. Poor attendance negatively impacts personal, social, and academic development and may indicate abuse or neglect. Attendance and registration arrangements are crucial in safeguarding our pupils, as outlined in the **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)** guidance.

Where a pupil's absence reaches 10% or more, Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School will work closely with parents to provide additional targeted support to remove any barriers to attendance. The SMT will address these situations sensitively, recognising the importance of school as a place of safety and support for pupils facing difficulties, before resorting to punitive measures.

The school aims to publish term dates to parents over a year in advance to allow for holiday and travel arrangements without disrupting a pupil's education. Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence during term time.

3. Responsibilities of the School

The school is committed to ensuring that attendance is monitored rigorously. As part of our safeguarding duties, Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School will inform the relevant LEA and/or Children's Social Care (CSC) in the following situations:

- A single absence raises child protection concerns (refer to the **W054 Children Missing Education Policy** and the **W044 Safeguarding Policy**).

- A pupil has four and a half days of unauthorised absence in any six-week period (other than for reasons of sickness or agreed leave of absence).
- A pupil of compulsory school age is deleted from the school register without a known destination. This must be reported to the LEA where the pupil resides, in compliance with **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**.
- Without reasonable explanation, a pupil starts or leaves the school at a non-standard transition point.

4. The School Day

All pupils are expected to be in their classrooms for registration by 08:45 each day. The normal school day ends at 15:30, though childcare is provided until 18:00, and children can be collected or signed out at any time between 15:30 and 18:00.

5. Requesting Absence

Parents are required to report their child's absence by 08:00 on the first day of absence. Absence notifications should be made by calling the school office at 01242 258079 or by emailing squirrels@deanclose.org.uk. If the absence continues, parents should provide daily updates unless otherwise agreed with the school.

Planned medical appointments should be communicated in writing to the school office, while requests for non-medical absences must be sent to the Head. Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence during term time.

6. Authorised vs Unauthorised Absences

Authorised Absences include:

- Illness (with a doctor's note if more than three consecutive days)
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours
- Days of religious observance
- Family emergencies

Unauthorised Absences include:

- Absences without notification
- Holidays during term time not approved by the head
- Truancy

Persistent unauthorised absences will be referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and may lead to further intervention, including legal action if necessary.

7. Late Arrival Procedures

Pupils arriving late must report to the school office with a parent or guardian to sign in. Persistent lateness without valid reasons will trigger an early intervention meeting with parents to address any barriers to punctuality and agree on an improvement plan.

8. Medical Appointments

We request that non-emergency medical appointments be scheduled outside school hours. If this is not possible, the school must be notified in advance, and proof of appointment may be required.

9. Term-Time Holidays

Holidays during term time are strongly discouraged. Requests for such holidays must be made to the Head at least two weeks in advance and, for school aged children, will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, such as serious family illness or bereavement.

10. Support Measures

Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School offers support to families experiencing difficulties with regular attendance. This may include input from the Senior Management Team (SMT) or referral to external agencies such as Early Help or the community Social Worker. An attendance action plan will be developed to identify and remove any barriers to attendance.

DCPPS considers the following thresholds as guides:

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.

11. Reporting Attendance to Parents

Attendance data is collated by teaching staff and the school administrator. Parents and staff have access to attendance statistics through 'My School Portal' and in their child's End of

Year Reports. Attendance is also regularly monitored by the School Administrator and DSL. Concerns are followed up with the parents immediately.

12. Part-Time Home-Schooling

The school offers a part-time home-schooling arrangement for families who choose a blended education model. Families must apply to the Head, providing a detailed educational plan. A formal meeting will be held to explore options before an agreed plan is put in place. Pupils must attend school at least 60% of the time, and parents are required to submit regular reports. The school will inform the local authority that the child is home-schooling.

Attendance for part-time home-schooled pupils will be recorded based on required school days and submitted home-schooling reports. These arrangements are reviewed termly and must meet statutory requirements.

13. Monitoring and Tracking

Attendance is monitored daily through electronic registration. The school regularly reviews attendance data, focusing particularly on pupils or cohorts at risk of persistent or severe absence. The Senior Attendance Champion, DCPPS DSL Mrs Nicole Radley, will ensure that all staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with school policies. Attendance data will be reviewed with the governing body, which will provide support and challenge where necessary to improve overall attendance.

The school will share attendance data with the local authority where required, including for pupils with persistent absenteeism (below 90% attendance), in compliance with statutory regulations.

14. Pupils at Risk of Becoming Persistently Absent

- Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School closely monitors pupils who are at risk of becoming persistently absent, defined as those whose attendance drops below 90%. For these pupils:
- The school will engage early, working collaboratively with parents to understand barriers to attendance.
- Targeted interventions will be put in place, such as mentoring, pastoral support, and working with external agencies where appropriate.
- Regular communication with parents will help ensure support plans are effectively implemented to prevent pupils from becoming persistently absent.

15. Persistently Absent Pupils

Pupils who are persistently absent (missing 10% or more of school sessions) will receive targeted, formal interventions:

- The school will work collaboratively with local authorities, ensuring a joined-up approach to addressing barriers to attendance.
- More formal conversations will take place with parents, outlining the possibility of legal interventions if improvements are not made.
- Support will continue to focus on the underlying causes of absenteeism, with referrals made to children's social care if safeguarding concerns are identified.
- The school will remain sensitive to the needs of the pupil and family, prioritising support over punitive measures where possible.

16. Severely Absent Pupils

In cases where a pupil's attendance becomes severely low (below 50%), Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School will work closely with local authorities to agree on a joint approach for additional support. This may involve whole-family plans, educational health care plans, or alternative educational provision. The school will also ensure that any safeguarding concerns are promptly addressed through a multi-agency approach, including referrals to children's social care. Where necessary, statutory children's social care assessments will be conducted, and attendance will be integrated into children in need or child protection plans.

17. Support for Pupils with a Social Worker

Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School recognises the potential challenges faced by pupils who have, or have had, a social worker. Staff will be informed of these pupils, and the impact of welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues on their attendance will be considered. The school will provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments as needed, acknowledging that the effects of statutory social care intervention can persist even after the intervention has ended. The school will share attendance data with the local authority, including informing the pupil's social worker of any unexplained absences and if the pupil's name is to be deleted from the school register.

18. Pupils with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School acknowledges that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance due to medical conditions or SEND. These pupils have the same right to education as their peers, and the school works closely with parents

and external agencies to ensure reasonable adjustments are made. A personalised MyPlan, coordinated by the SENCo/DSL, in collaboration with the class teacher, will be put in place to address any in-school barriers.

In exceptional cases, a temporary part-time timetable may be offered, but with a clear pathway back to full-time attendance. Part-time timetables will not be used to manage behaviour.

19. Support for Cohorts with Lower Attendance

Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School will proactively use attendance data to identify cohorts of pupils with, or at risk of, lower attendance than their peers. Strategies will be developed to support these pupils, and the school will work with other local schools and the local authority to share effective practices where common attendance barriers exist. By identifying trends and patterns within specific groups, the school will ensure that targeted interventions are implemented to improve attendance.

20. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by the provisions outlined in the **Education Act (1996)**, which requires parents to ensure their children receive regular schooling. The school is also guided by **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** and relevant DfE guidance on attendance, safeguarding, and pupil well-being.

21. Review and Update

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school management team, incorporating any changes in legislation or data trends. Updates will be communicated to parents at the start of each school year or whenever significant amendments are made.

22. Conclusion

Regular attendance is essential for the educational and social benefits it offers our pupils. By adhering to this policy, we aim to build a foundation for success and well-being in our pupils' lives.

Appendix 1: Registration Procedure and Protocols

Registration is carried out on paper from 08:15 and electronically by class teachers at 08:45 and 13:15. Registers must be completed within 10 minutes of the start of each session. Absence codes are clearly shown on iSAMS, and staff can only select

from the list provided. Unauthorised absences will be followed up by the school office and parents will be contacted by the School Administrator.

Appendix 2: Progressive Action Plan Based on Parental Response

This appendix outlines the progressive steps taken by the school to address attendance concerns, with actions tailored according to parental response. This approach ensures that the school maintains a proactive stance on attendance while offering appropriate support and intervention as needed.

Stage 1: Initial Absence Concern

- Trigger: Child's attendance falls below 90% (persistent absence threshold) without a reasonable explanation.
- Action: The class teacher contacts parents to discuss the attendance concern, if they haven't done so already.
- Parent Response: If parents engage and provide an explanation, the school will monitor attendance and offer support if needed.
- Outcome: If attendance improves, no further action is required.

Stage 2: Continued Absence (Below 85%)

- Trigger: Attendance remains below 85% despite initial contact.
- Action: Formal letter sent from the Headteacher to parents, outlining the attendance concern and potential impacts on the child's learning.
- Parent Response: Parents are encouraged to attend a meeting with the Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion to discuss potential support and agree on an attendance improvement plan.
- Outcome: Monitoring continues, with weekly attendance reviews. If attendance improves, return to Stage 1 monitoring.

Stage 3: Persistent Absence with Limited Parental Response

- Trigger: Attendance continues below 85%, with limited or no parental engagement.
- Action: Second letter sent, informing of escalation if attendance does not improve. The school arranges a follow-up meeting or home visit to address concerns.
- Parent Response: If parents respond and attend a meeting, support options are discussed (e.g., external referrals, school nurse involvement).

- Outcome: Regular reviews implemented. If improvement is noted, return to Stage 2 monitoring.

Stage 4: Chronic Absence (Below 80%)

- Trigger: Child's attendance falls below 80%, indicating chronic absence.
- Action: Formal meeting with parents, Headteacher, and external agencies as appropriate (e.g., Educational Welfare Officer, social services).
- Parent Response:
 - Engaged Response: Parents participate, and an intensive support plan is implemented.
 - Non-Engaged Response: If parents do not engage, a written warning outlines potential consequences (e.g., referral to local authority).
- Outcome: Attendance is monitored with bi-weekly reviews. Non-engagement leads to referral to local authorities for additional support.

Stage 5: Referral to Local Authorities

- Trigger: Continued absence with no engagement or improvement.
- Action: Referral to the local authority's Educational Welfare Service for further intervention.
- Parent Response: Parents are notified of the referral and invited to work with the authorities.
- Outcome: Authorities manage further attendance interventions, and the school supports as needed.

Notes:

- *All actions should be documented carefully, including dates, parental responses, and actions taken.*
- *Regular monitoring and a supportive approach are essential to encourage parental engagement and improve attendance outcomes.*

Appendix 3: DfE Attendance Codes

Present Codes:

/ Present AM	Present in the morning
\ Present PM	Present in the afternoon
P – Present at School	Present – at School
2 – Present, no charge	Used for when non-compulsory age children come into school on a day they wouldn't normally be in. Usually for performances.
HC – Health Centre	Used for when a pupil is in the Health Centre (HC) for a short period of time. Doctor's appointments should be recorded as such. If a boarder is ill in the HC and out of school for the whole day, please record as illness. Boarders ill in house should be recorded as illness. (Not used by DCPPS)
MD – Music/Drama Lesson	(Not used by DCPPS, children are signed in and out of school by music teachers)
EC – Extra Curricular Lesson	(Not used by DCPPS)
LS – Learning Support	(Not used by DCPPS)
B – Off-site activity	Used for School trips and off-site activities when the pupils are supervised. Use code V in most instances (Not used by DCPPS)
J – Interview/Open Day	Interviews with employers or a visit to another educational establishment (Not used by DCPPS)
V – Educational Visit or Trip	Used for School trips and off-site activities when the pupils are supervised. (Not used by DCPPS)

Authorised Absence Codes:

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 (This is not on the drop down choices for DCPPS)
R – Religious Observance	

S – Study Leave	Only to be used for study leave prior to the Summer Public exams – not for trial exams (Not used by DCPPS)
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Unauthorised Absence Codes:

G – Family holiday (not agreed)	If a previous request has not be 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.
UA – Unauthorised absence (this shows as O on drop down menu for DCPPS)	
U – Arrived in school after registration closed	Use for late arrivals where no valid reason to use the above codes is found. (Not used by DCPPS)

Other Admin Codes – little reason to use the codes below

X - not required to be in School	Non-Compulsory school age for DCPPS
Z - pupil not on admissions register	(Not used by DCPPS)
# - planned or partial closure	
NC – Non-contact	
9 – Club/Games’	
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.