



**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 for all pupils so they can fully access the educational opportunities the school provides. It is intended to comply with the Department for Education's [\*Working together to improve school attendance\*](#) (statutory from 19 August 2024), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, and related statutory guidance. It sets out the required actions of staff, parents, and pupils, and is designed to be fair, consistent, and grounded in safeguarding practice. Regular attendance is an integral part of our safeguarding duties.

## 2. Statutory Guidance

This Attendance Policy is underpinned by the DfE's statutory guidance [\*Working together to improve school attendance\*](#) (August 2024). The school has a legal duty to have regard to this guidance. The guidance emphasises early intervention, partnership with families, accurate record-keeping, and proportionate escalation when needed.

## 3. Attendance Expectations

- All pupils are expected to aim for 100% attendance, except for authorised reasons (e.g. illness, medical appointment).
- Our school target is at least 95% attendance.
- Persistent absenteeism (defined nationally as missing 10% or more of sessions) will trigger formal intervention.
- Poor attendance undermines pupils' academic, social, and emotional development and may indicate underlying risks, including neglect or safeguarding concerns.
- The school will publish term dates well in advance to help families plan; leave of absence during term time will be granted only in exceptional circumstances according to regulation and guidance (new rules restrict leave authorisation).

## 4. Responsibilities of the School

- **Registering attendance and following up absence**  
Class teachers must take registers accurately each session, using the updated DfE attendance codes (2024).  
They must promptly pass any unexplained absence queries to the school office. Senior leaders, including the Senior Attendance Champion, will monitor attendance data weekly and identify patterns or trends requiring action.
- **Deletion from roll / admissions register changes**  
In compliance with the Pupil Registration Regulations 2024, the school must notify Gloucestershire County Council when a pupil of compulsory school age

is added to or removed from the admissions register outside standard transition points, giving the required information.

If a pupil is removed from the roll without a known destination (and the school has no evidence the pupil is receiving education elsewhere), this must also be reported to the Local Authority.

- **Extended absence/non-return**

If a pupil fails to return after authorised leave or prolonged absence without explanation, or starts/leaves at non-standard transition points without justification, the school will investigate and may notify the Local Authority.

- **Reporting certain long absences**

Providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of **ten school days** where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). Local authorities must agree the frequency that attendance returns are to be provided with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.

- **Safeguarding and child protection**

A single unexplained absence may trigger child protection concerns under the school's safeguarding policy (e.g. Children Missing Education). The school must liaise with the local safeguarding hub (e.g. MASH) when absence gives rise to serious concerns.

Attendance issues should always be viewed through a safeguarding lens, particularly for pupils with a social worker, looked-after children, or vulnerable cohorts.

- **Intervention and escalation**

The school will hold discussions with parents when attendance gives cause for concern, seeking to understand and remove barriers. The first stages of intervention are internal.

For pupils who become persistently absent (below 90%), the school will consult or notify the Gloucestershire Inclusion and Attendance Team or Early Help, according to local protocols.

If absence persists or is severe, the school may refer to the Local Authority for formal enforcement or legal action.

The school will support reintegration after prolonged absence, bridging gaps and restoring routines.

- **Policy review and governance**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and approved by the Trustees. Attendance data and strategy will be considered in governance meetings for accountability.

## **5. Responsibilities of the Parents and Carers**

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually. They must contact the school by 08:00 on the first day of absence, stating the reason. For frequent or prolonged illness, the school may request medical evidence. Parents should also communicate planned medical or other appointments in advance.

## **6. Responsibilities of the Trustees**

Trustees will receive regular reports on attendance trends and hold leadership to account for the effectiveness of attendance strategies. They will challenge and support actions to raise attendance.

## **7. The School Day**

Pupils should be in classrooms and ready for registration by 08:45 each day. The school day ends at 15:30 (with childcare until 18:00).

Registers are taken electronically at the start of morning and afternoon sessions, using the updated attendance/absence codes (2025). Children not in school by 08:55 will be marked as unauthorised absence (N). Should they arrive late, by 08:55, the teacher will mark them 'Late' in the register (L), recording the time they arrived. If a child arrives late, between 09:55 and 09:15, the school Administrator will change the record to 'Late' in the register. Should they arrive after 09:15, they will be marked 'U' (Arrived in school after registration closed, with no valid reason to use other codes) or another more suitable code, where appropriate. NB: Code 'U' is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Staff training will ensure correct code usage.

## **8. Reporting Absence**

Parents must report absence by 08:00 via telephone or email (to the school office). Absence notifications should be made by calling the school office at 01242 258079 or by emailing [squirrels@deanclose.org.uk](mailto:squirrels@deanclose.org.uk). In ongoing absence, daily updates are expected unless otherwise agreed. Planned medical appointments should be notified in advance. Requests for leave of absence must be submitted to the Head; only exceptional circumstances will be authorised (in line with regulation)

## **9. 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
- Religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances (on a discretionary basis)

**Unauthorised Absences** include:

- Absences without notification
- Holidays during term time not approved by the head
- Truancy
- Persistent unauthorised absence will lead to referral to Gloucestershire's inclusion/attendance team for further intervention and potential legal action. Where unauthorised absence involves safeguarding concerns, the school will refer to Children's Services.

## **10. Late Arrival Procedures**

Late pupils must sign in at the office with an accompanying adult. Frequent lateness without valid excuse prompts a meeting with parents to agree strategies for improvement.

## **11. 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.

## **12. 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 will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, such as serious family illness or bereavement.

## **13. 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.

The school uses the following thresholds as guides:

Category	Percentage	Equiv. no. Days-off per Year	Implications
Excellent	100%	0 days	Gives the very best chance of success and full access to learning.
Good	95-99%	Up to 8 days	Attendance at this level is unlikely to have a significant impact on learning, but any further reduction may begin to do so.
Cause for Concern	90-94%	9-16 days	Attendance at this level is likely to impact learning. The school will contact parents to discuss support and improvement strategies.
Persistent Absence (Statutory Threshold)	Below 90%	17+ days	Defined nationally as <i>persistent absence</i> . Attendance at this level will impact learning and wellbeing and is a safeguarding concern. The school is required to involve the Local Authority and, where appropriate, Children's Services.

Attendance below 90% will prompt formal intervention.

## 14. Provision of Work During Absence

During a child's absence, the school will make every effort to support continued learning in a developmentally appropriate way. In certain circumstances, teachers may provide resources. However, due to the hands-on and interactive nature of early years learning, not all classroom experiences can be replicated at home. For extended absences, families are encouraged to communicate with the school to discuss how best to support the child's continuity of learning. Please note that for unnotified or unauthorised absences, the school may not be able to provide work or resources in advance.

## 15. Reporting Attendance to Parents

Attendance data is collated by teaching staff and the school administrator and overseen by the Senior Attendance Champion. 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.

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents will be contacted to discuss any emerging issues.

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (persistent absence), or where unauthorised absence is recorded, the Head of School will meet with parents to agree a plan to improve attendance.

In line with statutory guidance, the school will make referrals to the Local Authority and, where necessary, to Children's Services when a pupil's absence raises safeguarding concerns or remains a persistent issue despite school intervention.

## 16. Part-Time Timetables

Dean Close Pre-Preparatory School expects all pupils to attend school full time. In exceptional circumstances, and only where it is in the best interests of the pupil

(e.g., for medical reasons or as part of a reintegration plan), a temporary part-time timetable may be agreed.

Any part-time timetable must:

- Be authorised by the Head following a formal meeting with parents.
- Be clearly time-limited and regularly reviewed.
- Include a clear pathway back to full-time attendance.
- Be reported to the Local Authority as required.

Part-time timetables will not be used as a long-term arrangement or to manage behaviour.

## **17. 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 Trustees, 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) and severely absent pupils (below 50%), in compliance with statutory regulations.

## **18. 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, including at 95% and below, 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.

## **19. Long Absence Due to Illness**

The School must provide the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on health needs.

## **20. 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.

## **21. 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.

## **22. Support for Pupils with a Social Worker**

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 it must be time-limited, reviewed regularly, and include a clear pathway back to full-time attendance. Part-time timetables will not be used to manage behaviour.

### **23. 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.

### **24. 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.

### **25. 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 the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (2025), alongside relevant DfE guidance on safeguarding and pupil well-being.

### **26. Review and Update**

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

### **27. 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. Regular attendance also forms part of our safeguarding duty.



## **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 in the classroom within 10 minutes of the start of each session. Morning registration closes at 09:15, before which, late arrivals will be marked with 'L' and after which, they will be recorded as 'U'. Absence codes are clearly shown on iSAMS, and in Appendix 3 in the DCPPS Attendance policy, 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 adjusted according to parental response. The school aims to remain proactive and supportive while fulfilling its statutory and safeguarding responsibilities. The plan follows current national guidance and Gloucestershire County Council expectations, ensuring a consistent and lawful approach.

#### **Stage 1: Early Concern**

When a child's attendance falls below **95%** over a monitoring period (for example, six to eight weeks or half a term) without an acceptable explanation, the school administrator or attendance lead will contact parents by telephone or email. This initial contact aims to raise awareness of the issue, clarify expectations, and remind parents of their legal duty to ensure regular attendance.

If parents engage and share reasons or barriers, the school will offer proportionate support such as pastoral discussion, signposting to medical advice, or practical adjustments to support attendance. Attendance will then be monitored for a short period (typically three to four weeks). If attendance improves, no further action is required. If concerns remain, the case moves to Stage 2.

No notification to the Local Authority is made at this stage.

#### **Stage 2: Cause for Concern (90–94.9%)**

If attendance remains between **90 and 94.9%**, or if a pattern of absence becomes apparent (such as repeated unauthorised absences, frequent illness without evidence, or consistent lateness), the school will send a formal letter from the Head or Senior Attendance Champion. This letter will outline the concern, explain the effect of absence on learning, and invite parents to attend a meeting.

At this meeting, the school and parents will work together to identify barriers to regular attendance and agree an **Attendance Support Plan (ASP)**. The plan will include clear targets, agreed support, and a review period. Attendance will be monitored weekly. If improvement is made, the case will revert to Stage 1. If there is little or no improvement, the case progresses to Stage 3.

At this stage, attendance concerns are managed within school. The Local Authority will not normally be notified unless there are safeguarding concerns or the child's attendance continues to decline towards the persistent absence threshold.

### **Stage 3: Persistent Absence (Below 90%)**

Where attendance falls **below 90%**, the pupil is classed as **persistently absent** under national definitions. The school will send a second formal letter confirming this status and outlining the next steps. A further meeting or, where appropriate, a home visit will be arranged to explore the reasons for absence and identify any additional support required.

If parents engage, the school will continue to provide support, which may include referral to Early Help, involvement of the school nurse or SENCo, or targeted pastoral input. If parents do not engage or attendance fails to improve, a written warning of escalation will be issued.

At this stage, the school may consult or notify the Gloucestershire Inclusion and Attendance Team and/or initiate an Early Help Assessment where attendance remains below 90% or parental engagement is limited. Where safeguarding concerns are evident, the school will also liaise with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Attendance is reviewed fortnightly. If improvement is sustained, monitoring can return to Stage 2. If not, the case moves to Stage 4.

### **Stage 4: Severe or Ongoing Absence (Below 85%)**

If attendance drops to **85% or below**, or remains persistently low despite previous interventions, the situation becomes a serious concern. A formal meeting will be held with parents, the Head, and, where appropriate, external professionals such as the Gloucestershire Inclusion and Attendance Officer, the Early Help Coordinator, or Children's Services. Safeguarding is always a central consideration.

A formal support or attendance contract will be drawn up, setting out expectations, timeframes, and consequences.

- If parents engage: the school implements an intensive support plan, reviewed weekly or fortnightly.
- If parents do not engage: a final written warning will be issued explaining that the matter will be formally referred to the Local Authority for possible legal action.

### **Stage 5: Local Authority Referral**

If attendance remains below 85% or parents fail to engage despite repeated offers of support, the school will make a formal referral to the Gloucestershire County Council Inclusion and Attendance Team. The Local Authority may then consider a penalty notice, prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or the issue of a School Attendance Order.

Where safeguarding concerns are identified, a referral will also be made to Children's Services. Parents will be informed of any referral and encouraged to cooperate with

the Local Authority. The school will continue to support and monitor the child as appropriate.

### **Deletions from Roll**

In accordance with the *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*, the school will notify Gloucestershire County Council when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register, providing the reason for removal and all required details.

### **Key Principles and Record Keeping**

- **Documentation:** All communications, meetings, letters, and interventions will be carefully recorded, including dates, attendance data, parental responses, and support offered.
- **Safeguarding:** Any unexplained or persistent absence will be considered in the context of possible safeguarding concerns, including neglect or exploitation. Pupils with an allocated social worker will be closely monitored and their social worker informed of attendance issues.
- **Professional Judgement:** Attendance thresholds are guidelines. Staff will act early when patterns of concern emerge, even if attendance remains above 90%.
- **Support for Individual Needs:** Pupils with medical needs, SEND, or mental-health challenges may require tailored provision such as phased returns or reduced timetables, reviewed regularly.
- **Timely Escalation:** Action between stages will be prompt. Delays in responding to attendance issues reduce effectiveness and may increase risk.

The school's aim throughout this process is to work in partnership with families, identifying and addressing barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity, ensuring that every pupil can attend school regularly, feel safe, and flourish.

### Appendix 3: DfE Attendance Codes

#### Present Codes:

/ Present AM	Present in the morning
\ Present PM	Present in the afternoon
L	Late arrival after registration began but before the registration was closed (until 09:15).
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.
K – Education Provision	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
B – Off-site activity	Attending any other approved educational activity. e.g taster days
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:** these codes are used when the School has given approval for the absence in advance or has accepted an explanation.

I - Illness	Illness
M - Medical/Dental appointments	Medical/Dental appointments
C - Leave of absence authorised	A leave of absence request should be made in advance in writing to the Head and is only authorised in exceptional circumstances
E – Excluded	Excluded/suspended
J1 – taster day elsewhere	Absence for the purpose of attending an interview for admission to another education institution
R – Religious Observance	Religious Observance
X - not required to be in School	Non-Compulsory school age for DCPPS

#### Unauthorised Absence Codes:

G – Family holiday (not agreed)	If the school have not authorised a school holiday
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 and code changed.
O – Unauthorised absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
U – Arrived in school after registration closed	Arrived late, after registration closed (09:15) where no valid reason to use the above codes is found.