DEAN CLOSE
SCHOOL
CHELTENHAM

Independent, Co-educational, Day and Boarding Senior School

Attendance Policy (S139)

Registered Charity No: 1086829

Last Reviewed: January 2026
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Owner: Assistant Head Operations

DEAN CLOSE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1. A range of documents, circulars and guidance for good practice govern attendance at Dean Close School. Key documents, which inform this policy include:
   a. *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*
   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.

5. Boarding pupils are covered by the Boarding Standards: NMS Standard 22 places a legal requirement upon staff who have boarders in their charge to know their whereabouts at **all times**. The Missing Pupil Policy (S114) must be referred to if the whereabouts of a pupil is not known.

6. Policy Statement

For pupils to fully benefit from the educational opportunities provided by Dean Close it is vital that high levels of attendance and punctuality are sustained throughout the academic year. Dean Close 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.

7. 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 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 and Housemaster/mistress (HsM) 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.

8. 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.

9. 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 HsM and Main School Office 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 8.20am roll call). If they arrive after roll call at 8.20am but before 8.50am they must sign in at the Front Office and will be marked as late but present. However, if a student arrives after the start of Period 1 (after 8.50am), they will be marked as absent for that registration period (am registration). If the lateness is due to a legitimate reason e.g. a medical appointment, the absence can be authorised.
h) Requests for planned medical appointments, part days away from School or university open days, should be sent by email to the Housemaster with the Assistant Head Operations copied in.
i) Requests for planned absences of a day or more should be sent in writing to the Assistant Head Operations, who will refer to the Head if appropriate. 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.

10. 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.

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 L 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, classes or tutor groups
f) Follow up any absences from lessons to deal with truancy that might occur after morning or afternoon registration.
g) It is also required that HsMs will monitor attendance, and will refer to the Pastoral team, or SLT team as appropriate, if there is any cause for concern in pattern or number of absences.

Responsibilities of the school attendance administrator

h) 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.
i) 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.
   - Differentiate appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence
   - Meet regularly with the Assistant Head Operations 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 Assistant Head Operations where necessary.
   - Mark in those pupils who arrive at school after 8.20 before 8.50am as Late (L). If a pupil arrives after 8.50am allocate an appropriate code.
   - Forward all request for leave of absence to the Assistant Head Operations.

Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team

j) The Assistant Head Operations has overall responsibility for monitoring pupil attendance.

k) 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 days.
   - Ensure that systems are in place to inform UKVI of any sponsored 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.
   - Present attendance data half termly in SLT meetings and monitor trends and patterns
   - 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, teachers, and the Assistant Head Pupil Pathways.
   - 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.

11. Monitoring procedures

a) 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.
b) We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
c) We recognise that certain groups of pupils may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.
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 or UKVI 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, if:
   - A single absence raises child protection concerns (see the Missing Pupil Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)
   - The attendance of a pupil with an EHCP becomes a concern
   - The attendance of a pupil with a social worker becomes a concern. The social worker should also be notified.
   - 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.'
   - A pupil misses ten consecutive days without explanation (using code N, O, or U).
   - A pupil misses 15 days for illness consecutively or cumulatively within a school year, or it is anticipated they are going to.

i) The School will inform UKVI if:
   - A sponsored pupil misses ten consecutive registration points without explanation
   - A sponsored pupil leaves or starts at the School at a 'non-standard transition point.'

j) The School will contact parents/guardians to complete a welfare check after 10 days of consecutive absence, either in person or online.

12. 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 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.

13. The School Day

a) All pupils are expected to be in roll call in their Houses by 8.20am Monday to Saturday. If they are late for roll call they must sign in at the Front Office. The normal school day ends from 4.15pm from Monday to Thursday, from 5.15pm on a normal Friday, and after Games commitments / training on a Saturday. This time may vary depending on whether any fixtures that are taking place are home or away.

b) There is an expectation that all day pupils will have left site by 6.00pm unless specific arrangement have been put in place with the relevant HsM.
c) It should be anticipated and expected that pupils are actively involved in Games, drama and the rich variety of Co-curricular pursuits offered by the School. In some cases these will require additional and, in some instances, substantial time to be spent in excess of the above at School.

APPENDIX 1

Registration Procedure and Protocols

Registration is carried out by the HsM or nominated member of staff at 8.20am and 2.15pm. 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 complete their team sheet register on SOCS and this is cross checked by the Front Office.

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

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 6 attendance
- Check SOCS
- Ring house staff
- Ring Health Centre
- Ring parents (Day Pupils).

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

Period attendance has the following functions:

- to confirm Registration is complete and accurate, and
- to inform academic and pastoral review processes.

It is the teacher's responsibility to confirm that lesson registration is accurate and complete. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure pupils in school are attending their lessons and for tutors to follow up.

Registers should be completed within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson.

Pupils who have been registered as absent (for whatever reason, except illness) in advance of the lesson, should also have informed teachers of their absence in writing. Pupils who fail to inform you of absences are subject to sanctions.

APPENDIX 2

DFE Codes

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absences	
G	holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	prospective pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)