DEAN CLOSE
PREPARATORY SCHOOL
CHELTENHAM

Independent, Co-educational, Day and Boarding Preparatory School

DCPS Attendance Policy (P229)

Registered Charity No: 1086829

Last Reviewed: September 2026
Next Review Date: September 2027
Owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead

DEAN CLOSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Senior Attendance Champion for DCPS: Mrs Emma Bailey, DSL
ecbailey@deanclose.org.uk

1. A range of documents, circulars and guidance for good practice govern attendance at Dean Close Preparatory School. Key documents, which inform this policy include:
   a. *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)*
   b. *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)*
   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 registers must be preserved for a minimum period of six 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 (P216) 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 Preparatory School it is vital that high levels of attendance and punctuality are sustained

throughout the academic year. Dean Close 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 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.

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.

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 Prep School Office and relevant Houseparent 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 registration). If they arrive after registration starts 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 absences should be sent to the Head, Mr Moss. Family holidays are not classed as exceptional circumstances by the DfE, and therefore are not able to be marked as an authorised absence.

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 DSL 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 DSL 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 Head.

Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team

j) The DSL has overall responsibility for monitoring pupil attendance.
k) It is expected that they will:
   - Meet with the School Attendance Administrator weekly 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 the local authority of any pupil absent for 15 days, consecutively or cumulatively in one academic year, due to illness.
   - 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 Houseparents.
   - 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 Head 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.

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.

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 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 Houses or tutor groups by 8.20am Monday to Friday. Pupils who arrive after registration has started will be marked as late. Registration closes at 8.50am and pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as Unauthorised Absent.

Registration in the afternoon is at 1.50pm (Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri), and afternoon registration closes at 2.20pm. On Wednesdays, afternoon registration is from 12.15-12.45pm.

The normal school day ends at 4.15pm from Monday to Friday, and after IST and School Clubs for those enrolled.

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 HsP.

Pupils are also registered in lessons by their classroom teachers.

Requesting Absence
The school can grant leave of absence in certain circumstances:

- Attending an interview or test for entry into another educational institution
- Exceptional circumstances: this must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.
- To participate in an approved sporting activity

In these circumstances, a request for absence should be made directly to the Head, Mr. P. Moss.

Requests for appointments should be kept to a minimum. It is expected that routine appointments are made during holidays or after school hours.
A request for a holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance

If a pupil is unwell the parent should contact the HsP and Front Office before 8.20am each and every day of absence. Contact details are:
Front office – dcpsoffice@deanclose.org.uk
Deacon – LMGoodwin@deanclose.org.uk
Oaksey – aegdickson@deanclose.org.uk

Yeaman – bdmears@deanclose.org.uk

Managing Attendance

Staff taking registers will only mark pupils as present. All absences will be marked by the School Attendance administrator. Registers will be marked in accordance with the DfE Codes set out in Appendix 1. Absence codes are clearly shown on iSAMS.
An Unauthorised Absence Code (N – no reason provided for absence) will be followed up until a pupil has been accounted for, at which point the code will be changed. 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.

The process followed by the Front Office when a pupil is not marked as present is as follows:

- Check Period 1 or Period 5 attendance
- Visit teaching areas
- Check Music / Speech and Drama lessons
- Ring Health Centre
- Ring parents (Day Pupils).

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

APPENDIX 1

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)