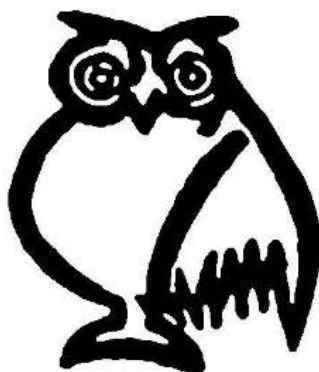


# Danbury Park Community Primary School



## Attendance Policy

Last revision dated:	Spring 2017
This revision completed during:	Autumn 2017
Agreed by the governing body:	21/09/2017
Date of next revision:	Autumn 2018

*Be wise, be happy, belong*



# Danbury Park Community Primary School Attendance Policy

## 1. Aims

1.1. The aims of this policy are to give clear guidance to pupils, parents, staff and governors as well as to other agencies working with Danbury Park Community Primary School. It also aims to provide a structure of action and to ensure consistency of practice. The policy is based on the requirements of the Local Authority (Essex County Council) and takes account of current legislation on the subject.

## 2. Rationale

- 2.1. Danbury Park School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, attendance every day is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.
- 2.2. Our school gives a high priority to communicating and conveying to parents and pupils the importance of positive and punctual attendance. Periods of absence can have a detrimental effect on a child's ability to achieve and progress. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.
- 2.3. If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- 2.4. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils through the half-termly monitoring of attendance and the awarding of certificates at the end of each academic year.

## 3. School Attendance and the Law

- 3.1. The law applies to all children of statutory school age.
- 3.2. Parental responsibility and legal consequences for irregular school attendance are prescribed within Section 7 and Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- 3.3. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 23(1) enables penalty notices to be issued to parents if their child has irregular school attendance.
- 3.4. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 clearly state that where a parent provides a reason for absence, the school decides whether or not the absence in question is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Leave of absence may only be granted by



the headteacher if there are exceptional circumstances. The headteacher no longer has the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

3.5. A leave of absence cannot be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in advance in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school, following the *Essex Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices*.

3.6. A pupil is categorised as *persistently absent* if their attendance falls below 90%.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1. Danbury Park School

- expects pupils to attend school every day, on time and properly equipped, ready to learn, unless there are exceptional circumstances; it is the headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise absence;
- will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality;
- will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible;
- staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness;
- will listen to and respect pupils when they are asked to provide an explanation of recurring lateness;
- will welcome pupils on their return from periods of absence and give assistance in order to catch up.
- will record attendance and lateness in the individual pupils' annual report to parents.

### 4.2. Pupils will

- be expected to attend school regularly and on time;
- be expected to attend all lessons punctually.

### 4.3. Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring their child attends school every day and punctually, being properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn;
- immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence, this must be confirmed in writing when their child returns to school;
- providing medical evidence if requested by the headteacher;
- working actively with the school and the Education Welfare Service to solve attendance problems if they do develop.

## 5. Arriving on Time

5.1. Beginning the school day on time allows children to participate in valuable social interaction and personal development experiences and helps in the child's full participation and enjoyment



of school. The school gates are opened at 8.45am and teachers supervise the playgrounds until the bell is rung at 9.00am when school day officially begins. The afternoon session begins at 1.00pm for pupils in Early Years Foundations Stage and Key Stage 1 and at 1.20pm for pupils in Key Stage 2

- 5.2. If children arrive after the above times on a regular basis, parents will be contacted by the class teacher in order to bring the problem to their attention. If the lateness does not improve, the parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the issue. Should the problem not be resolved, the Local Authority Education Welfare Service will be involved.

## **6. Completion of Registers**

- 6.1. Registers are completed using the standardised symbols and codes as laid down in the register books.
- 6.2. Registration begins at 9.00am each school day and 1.00pm/1.20pm each afternoon and registers will be closed 15 minutes after these times. The register is sent to the school office within 10 minutes of the registration session closing.
- 6.3. If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they should report to the school office to be entered into the late record book. They will be marked absent for unauthorised reasons for this session, unless there are exceptional circumstances as defined by the headteacher.
- 6.4. Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year. The school office is responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.
- 6.5. The school office is responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.
- 6.6. Sometimes legal action may be required, either to ensure parents uphold their responsibilities, or to safeguard the child's welfare. During such proceedings, the detail of school attendance could become important evidence; therefore a need for accurate and consistent registration is necessary.

## **7. Absence from School During Term Time**

- 7.1. Parents are asked to contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to advise that their child will not be attending school and why. Where this does not happen, the office staff will endeavour to make contact to establish that the child's absence is known to parents. Where contact cannot be made, the Headteacher will be informed. The Headteacher will consider what course of action to take. Where there are concerns regarding a child's safety the Headteacher may contact Social Care or the Police. Where contact cannot be made with parents, on the third day the Headteacher will contact Social Care or the Police.
- 7.2. Absences are classified as authorised or unauthorised.
  - 7.2.1. Absence may be authorised for:
    - Sickness,
    - Unavoidable urgent medical/dental appointments,



- Days of religious observance,
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement.

7.2.2. Absence will be unauthorised for:

- Holidays,
- Shopping,
- Haircuts,
- Birthdays,
- Family celebrations,
- Over sleeping.

7.3. In cases where a child will be attending a medical/dental appointment at the start of the school day, we ask parents to inform us at least by the day prior to the appointment. When a parent has informed either the office staff or the teaching staff of a reason for absence (e.g. medical appointment), this is recorded in the small blue book which accompanies the register in the class plastic wallet.

7.4. Where pupils are absent to recuperate from a prolonged sickness or a medical condition, teachers may provide work or tasks to be completed at home. Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

7.5. Work will not be provided by teachers for an authorised absence.

7.6. Upon the child's return to school, parents are asked to confirm all absences in writing clearly stating the reason for the absence.

## **8. Request for Leave of Absence**

8.1. Absence during term time is actively discouraged as stated in this policy, the school's prospectus and the school's handbook for new entrants. All absence from school has a potential detrimental effect on pupils' academic progress because of missed teaching and learning, and sometimes on social relationships.

8.2. There is no entitlement for parents to take children out of school during term time.

8.3. Parents may request authorisation for leave of absence. Permission from the headteacher will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents must complete a request for leave of absence, which is available from the school office or on the school website, prior to the dates which should be submitted in advance detailing the exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively. If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If the child is away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.

8.4. A letter will be sent to parents explaining why the request has been authorised or refused.

## **9. Education Welfare Service**

9.1. If a pupil's level of attendance is giving cause for concern and this does not improve following support from the school, then the Local Authority Education Welfare Service (EWS) is involved.



The EWS operates within a legal framework on behalf of the Local Authority and that current legislation is adhered to.

## **10. Targets**

- 10.1. Targets for attendance and lateness are set and agreed by the Governing Body annually and progress towards these is monitored by the Headteacher and reported to the Governing Body.

## **11. Monitoring**

- 11.1. Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the class teachers' role. It is acknowledged that an early response to a developing pattern of absence can be most effective. The circumstances of the individual pupil or group of pupils must determine the nature of communication regarding attendance.
- 11.2. Half-termly checks of the registers are undertaken by the headteacher, who writes to notify parents where their child's attendance falls below 90% for the academic year to date. Attendance is then closely monitored for the coming half-term period. If there is no improvement, parents are invited to a meeting to discuss the matter.
- 11.3. Certificates are awarded to pupils for 100% and 99% attendance at the end of every academic year.
- 11.4. The headteacher reports to the full governing body and the Curriculum and Pupil Related Matters Committee each term on attendance.
- 11.5. Data for statistical purposes is handled by the office staff and is sent to the Local Authority and Department for Education as required.