

# Attendance Policy

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## **1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **2.1 Statutory Duties**

The parent of any child of compulsory school age has a legal duty to secure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he or she is registered. Failure to secure the regular attendance at school of a registered student is a criminal offence which can lead to prosecution of the parent(s) in a magistrates' court.

Regular attendance means that Dean Academy students must be in school 100% of school days in each academic year. A school day is between 8.50am and 3.15pm. Students must be in school before 8.50am and attend all lessons during the day.

### **2.2 Definition of a parent**

**In Education Law (Section 576 of Education Act 1996), 'parent' means:**

- All natural parents, whether married or not.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.

- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

The fact that you do not live with the child is not a defence against securing their attendance at school.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Governing Board**

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Declan Mooney, Deputy Headteacher.

#### **3.4 The Attendance and Welfare Officer**

The School Attendance and Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families
- Working with other agencies to provide support for families to tackle absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Arrange and attend pre-prosecution Attendance Improvement Meetings with Mr Mooney, setting targets and ensuring that these are followed through.

The Attendance and Welfare Officer is Julie Stephens.

### **3.5 Attendance Team**

- All attendance queries, notification of absence etc can be made by contacting Attendance on [attendance@thedeanacademy.org](mailto:attendance@thedeanacademy.org). Direct attendance line 01594 840912, MyEd app or by texting 07943 106 814.
- If necessary, any questions will be passed to the relevant Head of Year or Pastoral Team.
- Attendance Team will record reasons for absence, monitor lateness, and ensure all registers are sent on time.
- Home School Liaison will complete home visit to support students that are struggling to attend.

### **Encouraging excellent student attendance**

- It is The Dean Academy's expectation that all students will attend school every day, 8.50am – 3.15pm during term-time and be in all lessons.
- The school will actively encourage 100% attendance by all students and will support them so they can continue to attend school.
- The school will take available opportunities to explain to parents the advantage of excellent attendance and disadvantages of absences.
- The school will discourage parents from taking students out of school during term time.
- The school will work with outside agencies to ensure that there are no barriers to attendance for students who have physical, medical, cultural, or economic needs.
- The school will collaborate with parents to overcome issues of non-attendance, involving external agencies where appropriate. In cases of severe or extended illness, or hospitalisation, the school will work with the Local Education Authority to try to ensure that educational provision is continued.

### **3.6 Tutors and class teachers**

- The school will ensure that it fulfils its legal obligation to register students every morning at 8.50am and every afternoon. These will be completed electronically, and teachers will also register students during the first 15 minutes of all lessons throughout the school day.

### 3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- **Parents will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their child attends 100% of the school year between 8.50am and 3.15pm and arrives punctually every school day during term time.**
- Parents must inform the school in advance, wherever possible, of absence, by contacting the Attendance Office. All medical appointments should be made outside school hours. If this is not possible a full day's absence will not be authorised for one medical appointment. Students are expected to be in school before and/or after appointments and a copy of the appointment card or letter should be provided.
- In the event of unexpected absence, the parents must contact the school. This must be done before 8.50am on the first and every day until the student returns to school.
- Absences can be reported by:
  - Attendance line: 01594 840912 (24-hour answer machine)
  - Email: attendance @thedeacademy.org
  - Text: 07624 811 992
  - MyEd app

### 3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day between 8.50am and 3.15pm when the school is open and attend all lessons during the day.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school before 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken during the afternoon.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as possible by calling the school Attendance Office (see also section 7).

Absences can be reported by

Attendance line:	01594 840912 (24-hour answer machine)
Email:	attendance @thedeacademy.org
Text:	07624 811 992
MyEd app	

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised provided the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides a copy of the appointment card/letter to the Attendance Office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. A full day's absence will not be authorised for one medical appointment and students should be in school before and/or after the appointment.

In the case of an extended absence due to ill health or other authorised circumstances parents will be given support by the school and, if necessary, referred to other agencies to facilitate the re-integration process. It is the responsibility of parents to be involved with this. This may include attending meetings in school.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late and the number of minutes entered into the register. If there is not a valid reason for lateness students will be given a Conduct point and a text will be sent to parents advising them of lateness.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. If the student has a valid medical appointment and proof of this has been produced the absence will be coded as medical. If there is no valid reason for lateness the student will be coded as unauthorised late. If a student has ten unauthorised marks the matter may be passed to Shire Hall and a fixed penalty fine issued to parents.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any student we expect in school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, we will do the following to ensure the safeguarding of that child:

- Text the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If there is no response to this, or if there is regular absence a telephone call will be made to the parent/carer. A home visit by the school's Home/School Liaison Officer may also be made.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. Home visits will also be made by the Home/School Liaison Officer. If absence continues, the school will consider contacting the police to arrange a Welfare check. The Education Inclusion Team at Shire Hall will also be notified of the student's absence.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels three times a year. All students will receive two progress reports and an end of year full report spread out through the school year. With each of these reports will be an up-to-date copy of the student's Attendance Certificate.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for. Parents must complete a Leave of Absence form, available from the Attendance Office or school website, at least two weeks before the planned event. This must be returned to the Attendance Office and supporting information may be requested. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A decision to authorise or unauthorise will be made by the Headteacher and parents will be notified. Should a

student be absent for an unauthorised leave of absence, a Penalty Notice for each parent in respect of each child will be applied for from the Local Authority.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

## **5.2 Legal intervention**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

- A range of strategies will be employed to support the student to improve their attendance, including meetings with the child, and/or parents, home visits and formal meetings.
- The school’s Home/School Liaison Officer may visit the homes of students that are struggling to attend.
- Parents/Carers may be invited into school for a meeting with the Attendance Officer to discuss any barriers that are preventing a student from attending regularly.
  - Referrals may be made to other external agencies such as School Counsellor, School Nurse, Early Help, Mental Health Teams etc. if it is agreed with the student and parents/carers that this may help the student or family.
  - A My Plan document under the Graduated Pathway may be completed for the student, setting targets to improve attendance and this will be regularly reviewed.

- For students with an Educational Health Care Plan an attendance target may be included in the Plan to support this.
- The school will also collaborate closely with Social Workers and/or Police if they are involved with students
- For continued or concerning unauthorised absence, the Headteacher will issue a Prosecution Warning letter advising parents of their legal responsibilities.
- In the case of further unauthorised absence, the Headteacher may call an Attendance Improvement meeting (AIM) with parents and students. This will be a formal meeting with the Deputy Headteacher and Attendance and Welfare Officer where targets will be set and reviewed.
- Continued poor attendance following an AIM review will result in a request being made to the Local Education Authority to initiate legal proceedings.
- Students with attendance of 90% and lower are classed as Persistent Absentees. Parents are notified when a student's attendance reach this level.

## **7. Rewards**

A variety of rewards are given to students who have 100% attendance. These include:

- Students with weekly 100% attendance will be entered into a Lotto draw for a £5 Amazon voucher for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Cakes for Tutor groups where all students have 100% weekly attendance.
- Postcards home and achievements points awarded for each term of 100% or improved attendance.

## **8. Attendance monitoring**

Each week the Attendance Officer reports to SLT, and Heads of Years with details of attendance for co-horts of students. This includes Tutor groups, Year Groups, SEND and Student Premium students.

All tutors are sent a weekly report of attendance for their group.

A weekly report showing attendance for all students, compared to the previous week is produced and monitored.

Reports showing students with regular 'broken' weeks enable patterns of absence to be identified. Parents of these students will be contacted by telephone or letter to identify reasons for this pattern.

### **8.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.
- As The Dean Academy is part of the Athelstan Trust our attendance data will be compared and analyzed with other schools in the trust.

## **8.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

## **8.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to teachers to facilitate discussions with students and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

## **8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Additional support will be offered from the Pastoral Support Team, Head of Year, School Counsellor, SEND Faculty to remove barriers in school that are preventing students attending.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by a member of SLT responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## **Appendix 1**

### **Attendance Codes**

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Education off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
#	School closed to pupils and staff
Y	Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend/No mark recorded