Dean Valley Community Primary School

Dean Valley
Community Primary

Attendance Policy

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Pupil Attendance Policy

Purpose

"Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn." (DfE: Working together to support attendance, Feb 24)

Dean Valley Community Primary School recognises the importance of good attendance and the impact of attendance on achievement and attainment. It is important that children develop a positive attitude to attendance at school and arrive on time so that they can access every opportunity offered to them during the school day.

We aim to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which children, staff, parents, governors, the local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will expect and encourage good attendance. Good attendance is seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

If you're not here, you're not making progress

How does my attendance stack up?

OUTSTANDING	**100%**
GOOD	**98-99.9%**
Not good enough yet	**Less than 98%**

How many days of learning have I lost?

Attendance (%)	Number of days absent from school
98	4 days
95	10 days (2 weeks)
90	20 days (4 weeks)
85	30 days (6 weeks)
80	40 days (8 weeks)

What about being late?

How late? (every day)	What's it mean?
5 mins	3 days lost!
10 mins	6.5 days lost!
15 mins	10 days lost!
20 mins	13 days lost!
30 mins	19 days lost!

What about my grades?

Students with no absences are **over 2 times more likely to achieve 5 or more Grade 4+ GCSE's** & 2.8 times more likely to **achieve 5 or more Grade 4+ GCSE's** including English & Maths than students missing 15-20% of their lessons.

Students who miss 19 days of school (just over 90% attendance) will drop at least 1 GCSE grade. 5 or more GCSE grades at 4+ can increase your lifetime earnings by over 40%

Statement of intent

Dean Valley Community Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils (97% +)
- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and sever absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school aims to promote, celebrate and reward good attendance by:

- Working in partnership with parents and carers, and communicating with them regularly to encourage high attendance.
- Raising awareness with parents and carers via school newsletter (Sway) and the school website.

- Providing breakfast club at school, if appropriate, and other strategies to promote good attendance.
- Attendance certificates at the end of term/week for individuals and classes.
- Class attendance trophy in Celebration Assembly

School Attendance Measures at Dean Valley

Percentage attendance	
98% +	Excellent
95% - 97.9%	Good
92% - 94.9%	Satisfactory
90% - 91.9%	Concerns
Below 90%	Serious concerns (persistent absenteeism)

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- It also refers to:
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Link governor for attendance to meet with the head each half term to discuss attendance across the school

<u>The head teacher/School Attendance Champion</u>

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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 pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Assistant headteachers in their absence to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officers are Eryn Gair and Stacie Booth and can be contacted via email – admin@deanvalley.cheshire.sch.uk and on 01625 572767

Class teacher

Class teacher responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office twice a day, once in the morning and once after lunchtime break.

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the head where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
- Parents are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with **more than 1 emergency contact number** for their child. We must be able to contact more than 1 person.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the head/attendance champion or attendance officers who can be contacted via email – admin@deanvalley.cheshire.sch.uk or head@deanvalley.cheshire.sch.uk or on 01625 572767

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

Training of staff

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

School keep an electronic attendance register and all pupils attending Dean Valley are entered onto this register.

We will take our attendance register ***at the start of the first session of each school day and after lunch***. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. (See Appendix)

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts promptly at **8:50am** and ends at **3:20pm**.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8:50am** on each school day. The classroom doors will be opened at **8:45am** daily and will be closed at **8:55am.**

The register for the first session will be taken at **8:50am** and will be kept open until **9:20am** The register for the afternoon session will be taken at **1:15pm**

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence sharing the reason for the absence by **9:00am** or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via:

- Calling the school and leaving a message on the absence line: **01625 572767** or
- Use Arbor to report the absence

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents are asked to contact the school via phone or email.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Information around which term-time absences the school can authorise can be seen within this policy. The form for this can be found in the appendices of this policy, the school website or from the office.

Lateness and punctuality

The school doors open at 8:45 and close at 8:55am after which time pupils are required to enter school via the main reception.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late 'L' (arriving after 8:55am and up to 9:20am)
- After the register has closed will be marked as 'U' for arrival after registration (arriving after 9:21am)

All children's attendance is monitored by the Office staff, Headteacher and Class teacher on a daily basis.

We monitor identified groups of children, for example, ‘persistent absentees’, children/families who are persistently late and will take appropriate remedial action when and where necessary.

We actively support parents and families in getting children to school on time so that their learning is not affected by punctuality and attendance issues. If there are concerns around attendance and punctuality you will be contacted by school to discuss how we can further support you and your child.

If a child is late on two or more occasions during a week a letter will be sent to parents to ensure that they are aware of the situation and the number of minutes learning lost that week.

Attendance letters will be sent to parents to inform them where attendance becomes a concern to let parents know that their child has attendance which currently is below expectation for us at school. (See appendix)

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will follow up all absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Parents are expected to contact the school by 9:00am on the day of absence.

School will:

- Call the pupil’s parent by 9:30am on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the parent or any of the pupil’s emergency contacts, the school may contact police if they have reason to be concerned about the absence.
- 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 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Family Support worker from the local authority.
- The head teacher/Attendance Champion and another member of Office team or SLT will do house visits if they have reason to be concerned about the absence.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.

- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with school will refer the absence to the local authority for them to consider whether to issue a 20 notice to improve or issue a penalty notice.

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parent/carer about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be done termly through a register report.

Authorised and Unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unexpected, unavoidable, and outside your control.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours (as stated by DfE).

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least ***four weeks*** before the absence, and in accordance with any ***leave of absence request form, accessible via the website or the school office.*** The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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 pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them) reports absence to the local authority who can then fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

The local authority issue penalty notices.

Before reporting parents to the LA for them to issue a penalty notice, the following is considered:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. However, school retain the discretion to request a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the threshold.

- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

If a **first penalty notice** is issued, the fine is **£160 per parent/carer, per child**, payable within **28 days** of the notice being issued. This will be **reduced to £80 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days**.

If a **second penalty notice** is issued to the same parent/carer for the same pupil **within three years of the first notice**, for either **term-time leave or irregular attendance**, the fine will be **£160 per parent/carer, per child**, payable within **28 days**. This notice is **not reduced for early payment**.
Unpaid penalty notices may result in **prosecution of the parent/carer**.

If a **third offence** occurs **within three years of the first penalty notice**, a further penalty notice will **not** be issued. Instead, the **Local Authority will consider next steps**, which may include:

- **Prosecution under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996**, which may result in a fine of up to **£1,000 or £2,500**, respectively.
- **Referral to other appropriate agencies for support or intervention.**

<u>Notices to improve</u>

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the local authority may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

A 20 day notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

The standard process for O/U code absences (10 sessions in the past 10 weeks) will escalate through the following stages, where appropriate:

Notice to improve
Notice to improve failed = penalty notice 1
Notice to improve failed = penalty notice 2
Section 444(1) Single Justice Procedure (SJP)

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.

- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a monthly basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.

- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officers will work with staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including Senco, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Send letters with Register certificates every 4 weeks to notify parents of concerns around attendance
- Persistent absence letter will include invite to meet with Headteacher and DSLs to look at ow we can best support the family in improving attendance
- Education Family Support Worker at the Local Authority will contacted if improvement in absence is not improved

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Attendance Officers and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Mental Health Policy
- SEND policy
- Medical Needs Policy

We have adopted the following attendance process as laid out by Cheshire East LA, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1

- **First day** of unauthorised absence. School to make a telephone call to parents/carers, exploring barriers to attending and measures to support child back into school, if fit and well. This may highlight the need for a meeting with the family. Send initial we have noticed your absence letter.

2

- If absence continues for **4-6 unauthorised sessions** (this could be a mix of U,O and G codes) school will write to the parent/carer using the 4-6 absence warning template letter (see appendix) and invite parent/carer in for a meeting to explore barriers and offer support to enable child to attend. The attendance contract will be used to record agreed actions.

3

- Following a series of **10 unauthorised absences over 10 weeks**, school may make a request for a Penalty notice for irregular attendance above 75% to the Attendance and Children Out of School Team (ACOOS).
- Schools **will** provide all evidence of contact made including telephone calls, letters, meetings and any support offered to the family to increase their child's attendance.

4

- The ACOOS team will then review the request to decide whether a 20-day notice to improve will be issued. If the team feel a notice to improve is not appropriate and more support is required to the family to support the child into school, this recommendation will be made to the school.

5

- If panel agree that a 20-day notice to improve is appropriate, parents/carers are issued a letter to advise them of the 20-day notice to improve, the date it commences and expectations during this period. School will also be notified via email.

6

- During this time of notice to improve period, schools must continue to offer child and family support.
- At the end of the notice to improve period school send a copy of the register certificate tothe LA. If there are further unauthorised absences in the 20-day notice to improve, then the ACOOS team will look at the case and agree whether a penalty notice will be issued.

7

- First time Penalty notice will be charged at £160 per parent per child. If paid within 28-days of the issue it is reduced to £80 per parent per child. Second offence is charged at £160 per parent per child if within 3 years of first notice. If the fine is not paid a request is sent to the ACOOS Team Manager, Head of Service and Legal team for authorisation for prosecution.

Appendix 1

Attendance register

The school uses **Arbor** to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1: attendance codes
The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement

B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law

Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

Appendix 3

Dean Valley Community School

Leave of Absence Request Form

We will consider your application of leave of absence during term time if it meets one or more of the criteria specified in the school's attendance policy.

Parents/Carers are **strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time**. Parents/Carers do not have the right to take their child or young person out of school for such a holiday. **In exceptional circumstances only**, the school may choose to grant a leave of absence. Please complete this form in line with the school Attendance policy. Please sign and return this form to school **NO LESS THAN TWO WEEKS** before your requested date of absence.

ALL SECTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED FOR THIS REQUEST TO BE CONSIDERED.

Pupil Name…… Year group…… Dates of absence ……to……..

Does your child(ren) have a sibling(s) at another school who will also be requesting a leave of absence on these dates? YES/NO

Name of sibling(s)…… Year group(s):…… School (if not Dean Valley):……

Have you ever requested leave of absence for your child(ren) during term time prior to this application? YES/NO

I am requesting this leave of absence because (please give reason in as much detail as possible)

……

……

……

……

……

……

Total days absence requested:…… Signed……|……(Parent/Carer) Date:……

To be completed by the Head Teacher.

Absence authorised / Absence not authorised Signed …… (head teacher) Date ……

Appendix 4

Cheshire East Council

Attendance Contract

Child's name:
Current attendance:
School/NCY:
Parent's name:

Senior staff member with overall responsibility:
Member of staff responsible day-to-day:
Local Authority Representative (If Applicable)

The specific targets of our plan. What we aim to do:

Achieving these targets

Cheshire East Council

Comments by the child/young person:

Agreeing to the contract:

We have agreed to this Attendance Contract and will

(a) work with the school (and council) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and

(b) carry out what we have promised to do.

We also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.

We understand that if my child has any unauthorised absences from school, a Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.

Signed (Parent): **Date:** **Signed (Parent):** **Date:**

Signed (School): **Date:**

Signed (local authority): **Date:**

Role	Name	Signature	Dated

Role	Name	Signature	Dated
Parent			
Parent			
School representative			
LA representative			

Agreed Review Date:

Appendix 5 – Attendance Letter Celebration

Attendance celebration letter

Dear Parents

Re: Attendance Information for «First_Name»

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly. As you are aware, it is important for your child's friendships and academic progress. The school target for attendance is 97%.

We are pleased to inform you that «First_Name» achieved «Percentage»% attendance for the ??? half of the 2024 - 2025 academic year. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both you and your child for «MeetExceed» the school target.

Yours sincerely

Vicky McPherson

Headteacher

Appendix 5: Template noticed your child's absence letter

[Insert Date]

Dear [Parents name]

We noticed that your child [Child's name] has been off this week. They have been missed.

Cheshire East Council are working with schools to try and improve school attendance because we know that school attendance makes such a big difference to children's' futures. The Department for Education tell us 'school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.' (DFE 2023).

We also want to remind you that the Education Act 1996 section 444, requires you to make sure that your child attends school, on time, every time the school is open.

If there are any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact [named person at school] to discuss further.

Further Information can be found on the websites below

Attendance information

School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Attendance and children out of education (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Early help support

Early Help Assessment (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Mental health support

Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Anna Freud on my mind

Yours sincerely

Mrs V McPherson

Headteacher

Appendix 6: Template Warning Letter

[Insert Date]

Dear [Parents name]

It has been brought to my attention that your child has not been attending regularly at school. According to the Attendance Register, [Child's name] attendance is currently [insert %], this is below the schools expected attendance.

[Child's name] currently has [insert number] unauthorised sessions, if this reaches 10 unauthorised sessions within a 10-week period then school can apply to the Local Authority to issue you with a Penalty Notice warning period, which could result in each parent receiving a £160.00 fine, reducing to £80.00 if not paid within 28 days.

I must remind you that S.444, Education Act 1996 requires you to make sure that your child attends school, on time, every time the school is open. I am writing this letter to give you an opportunity to make sure that from now on and in future, your child attends school regularly.

If your child continues to not attend regularly, a referral will be made to the Local Authority to pursue further action. These interventions may include,

(A) Issuing you with a Fixed Penalty Notice under S.444A Education Act 1996 which will make you liable to a penalty of up to £160. **(As above)**

(B) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444 (1) Education

Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you may be fined up to £1000.

(C) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under S.444 (1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted of this offence you may be fined up to £2,500 or be sent to prison for up to 3 months or both.

To avoid Local Authority intervention, please ensure your child attends school regularly and on time.

If there are any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact [named person at school] to discuss further.

Yours sincerely

Mrs V McPherson

Head teacher

Appendix 7: Reason to believe absence is holiday

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: CHILD NAME, FORM

I note from our records that Child has been absent from Dates. I understand you sent an email/ phoned school absences to advise Child had add Illness, however we have reason to believe that you were on holiday from Add Dates. This absence will be considered unauthorised, unless medical evidence can be provided (in the form of medical appointment card, medical stating child's name, letter from GP/ Hospital) by Add Date. If this is not provided, then we will be informing the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice. If a PN is issued, failure to pay the penalty fine within the required time may result in prosecution. I would like to remind you that under Section 444 of the education Act 1996 – Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school.

Please refer to chart below for details of the PN process including fines and timelines.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	**One child**	**Two children**
Paid within 28 days	£160 per parent, per child	£160 per child = £320 per parent
Paid within 21 days	£80 per parent, per child	£80 per child = £160 per parent
After 28 days	£160 per parent, per child	£160 per child = £320 per parent
After 28 days	May result in parental prosecution	May result in parental prosecution

Yours sincerely

Appendix 6

Pupil lateness sample letter

Dear _____

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time so that they can, over their time at Dean Valley, reach their full potential. As I am sure you are already aware, regular attendance is important not only for your child's academic progress but for their friendships too.

We have been reviewing the punctuality of our children over time since the start of the academic year, September 2024, and I am writing to let you know that _____ has been recorded late to school _____ times to date missing _____ minutes of school this week. Children should arrive at school no later than 8:50am, ready to go in for the register to be taken and learning to begin. Arrivals between 8:55am and 9:20am are recorded as 'L' late, and those after 9:21am recorded as U (late after registers close). A U code is recorded as 1 session absence which will contribute towards a collective 10 sessions instigating a possible fine 20-day notice to improve or fine for absence.

We understand that this can be due to a number of reasons during the school year, but if there is anything we can do to support you in ensuring that _____ arrives to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me as we are very happy to help.

Kind regards

Mrs V McPherson

Headteacher

Appendix 8

PENALTY NOTICE AND PROSECUTION

Penalty Notices may be issued for

Term time leave: Penalty Notice fines may be issued for term time leave of 5 or more days (10 sessions) in a 10-week period.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period: A Penalty Notices may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

However, school retain the discretion to request a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the threshold.

Per Parent/Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent/carer per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent/carer receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at:

£160 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent/carer for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at:

£160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued.

The Local Authority will decide on appropriate next steps which may include:

*Prosecution under s444 (1) or (1a) of the Education Act 1996 which may result in a fine of upto £1000 or £2500 respectively.

*Referral to other agencies.