



Attendance School Policy 2021-2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. At Dean Trust Ardwick we aim for 100% attendance.

1.2 We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and be successful in their adult lives.

1.3 We value all pupils and we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties together.

Attendance should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is an important aspect of safeguarding. This guidance takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000. the Equality Act 2010 and the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour Policy

2. AIMS

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996.
- The Education Act 2002.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended).
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013
- DfE (2019) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children Missing Education'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'

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

4. CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE

Authorised

4.1 **Illness** There may be the exceptional occasion where a pupil is ill and there is no alternative but to stay at home to ensure a speedy recovery. We would expect parents to take their children to the doctor in such cases.

Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible and provide the school with an expected date of return. School may require medical evidence at any time to authorise any absence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

4.2 **Medical / dental appointments** Parents are advised where possible to make medical appointments **outside of the school day** (e.g. doctors, dentist). **Where this is not possible, and appointments can only be made during the school day, pupils should attend school for part of the day.** If the medical appointment is during the school day, evidence must be provided. Schools should not authorise a whole day's absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning; the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa. Parents should notify the school in advance of an appointment and bring in the hospital appointment letter or dentist / doctors' appointment card to reception.

4.3 **Other authorised circumstances** These relate to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.

4.4 **Excluded (No alternative provision made)** Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

4.5 Granting approval for term time absence

4.5.1 According to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. (see 4.5.5 below).

4.5.2 The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteachers discretion. **Absence during term time should be avoided because pupils can fall behind with their work and find it hard to reintegrate.**

4.5.3 Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances **must send a written request to the Headteacher in advance of the event, leaving enough time for the school to discuss the request with the parent.** Retrospective requests, or requests which leave no time for the school's consideration, will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**.

4.5.4 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of any leave granted.

4.5.5. Exceptional circumstances for which Headteacher may grant leave include:

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness.
- Funeral of immediate family member.
- Religious observance.
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer).
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence.
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family member's graduation ceremony/passing out parade.

4.5.6 **Religious observance** We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. This necessitates a consideration by written request by the parent/carer of the pupil before the period of absence. Requests cannot be made retrospectively and any such requests will be unauthorised.

4.5.7 **Study leave** Study leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

4.5.8 **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence** It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444(6), states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

Dean Trust Ardwick will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months.

Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at Dean Trust Ardwick will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

We can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

We will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling for work or trade purposes and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school.
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service.
- The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

4.5.9 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place. See below on **Children Missing Education**.

4.5.10 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may request the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrate's court. An application for leave must be made in writing to the school, detailing the exceptional circumstances. (Please collect Absence Request form from school reception).

4.6 Late arrival

4.6.1 Pupils who are repeatedly late to school miss out on their education. **Registration begins at 8.40am**. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. **The register will close at 9.10am**. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (code U). This is not authorised, unless there is a satisfactory explanation and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate.

4.6.2 Upon late arrival, pupils must immediately report to reception.

4.6.3 'The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment with evidence.

4.6.4 The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

4.6.5 A sanction is given for pupils who are late to school without good reason. Any pupil late will receive a detention on the day of lateness, and parents will be notified of this by text message. Any repeated lateness will require parents/carers to come into school for a meeting with the Head of Year.

4.7 Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

4.7.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniform.
- Having their hair cut.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- Getting up late.
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school.
- Family holidays.

Please note this list is not exhaustive and there may be other reasons which the Headteacher may not authorise if deemed unsatisfactory.

5. WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

5.1 Parents / carers should:

- Ring the school as soon as possible after 8am and before 8.30am with an explanation of the absence. Parents may also use the School Gateway app to contact the school.

5.2 The school will:

- Notify the parent/carer via text shortly after the register closes at 9.10am if no reason has been given for an absence.
- Ring the parent/carer during the day if the school receives no reason for absence after 10am.
- Make a home visit if the school is not fully satisfied with the reason for absence or make a home visit on the third consecutive day of absence.
- Mark the pupil's absence as unauthorised if the reason for absence is unsatisfactory, or after one week if no reason has been provided.

5.3 In all cases of absence, a phone call to inform us, or an absence note is required. (There is a page in the pupils' planner for the note). **The Headteacher reserves the right not to authorise absences if the reason is not deemed satisfactory.**

6. MONITORING ABSENCES

61 Once a pupil's attendance falls below 98%, it then becomes a concern to us and we start to monitor their attendance closely. We support parents and carers by following a number of stages to help remedy the problem. The issue is escalated following any further absences after the first phone call alert has been made.

62 **In the first stage of absence at 100%-98% attendance.** A text message home will be sent to parents/carers to notify our concern regarding the absence. In the event of no response a telephone call may be sent in addition. This absence will remain unauthorised until the parent/carer has spoken to school. Form tutors will discuss any pupils' absence on the day of their return to school.

63 **In the second stage of absence at 97.9% - 95% attendance.** Contact will be made with home to invite parents/carers in to school to meet with the child's Pupil Support Manager to discuss ways in which we can support in order to help increase attendance and prevent further absences. At this stage absence may not be authorised without medical evidence.

64 **In the third stage of absence at 94.9% - 92% attendance.** Contact will be made with home to invite parents/carers in to school to meet with the child's Head of Year, at this stage an attendance contract will be drawn up and the parents/carers may face statutory action. All further absences will be unauthorised without medical evidence.

65 **In the final stage at 91.9% attendance and below,** legal action is likely to be requested from the Local Authority for statutory action of the unauthorised absence of the child from school. The Attendance Officer will invite parents/carers in to school to discuss this at a formal attendance panel involving a member of the senior leadership team.

66 In addition to the above an Attendance Officer/Pupil Support Manager may make a home visit to the registered address to discuss any attendance concerns. On the third day of any continuous absence, regardless of reason, a safeguarding visit will take place to see the child who is absent.

7. DELETIONS FROM THE REGISTER

7.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority.
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
- Death of a pupil.
- Transfer between schools.

- withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team).
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

72 Dean Trust Ardwick will follow Manchester City Council's **Children Missing Education Protocol** when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown. Where a pupil has not returned to school for **ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days**, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the pupil. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. The school will also act accordingly if it is felt there are safeguarding concerns due to the child's absence (please see the school's safeguarding policy)

8. HOW PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILD

81 We request that parents and carers:

- Talk to their child about school and show interest in their child's work and progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a written explanation.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education; form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Headteacher.

9. TAKING THE REGISTER

91 Pupils are registered for their morning session at 8.40am and the afternoon session at 1.20pm. in line with statutory guidance. Registers for every lesson will also be taken by the class teacher. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the register is taken accurately to prevent safeguarding issues arising e.g. if as pupil is absent but marked present.

92 Absent pupils without a reason are coded 'N' (no reason given) and counts as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. Where no reason is given after two weeks the absence is then coded O (unauthorised) and counts towards the possibility of statutory action being taken if 10 unauthorised sessions accrue. (see above).

10. REPORTING TO PARENTS

Parents receive a termly report of their child's progress which indicates their attendance record. Parents who use the School Gateway app have access to continuous updated attendance records of their child. Parents can also have a copy of their child's attendance registration certificate upon request.

11. USING ATTENDANCE DATA

11.1 Pupils' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and Department for Education and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

11.2 Close management and scrutiny of attendance records help us trigger action to support parents and pupils when attendance becomes a concern.

12. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

12.1 The school recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

12.2 We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

12.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils.
- Support from the school's welfare team

- Attendance panels.
- Attendance Plans
- Referrals to support agencies.
- PSCHE.
- Rewards
- Adapted timetables.
- Additional learning support.
- Behaviour support.
- Reintegration support packages.

124 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

125 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, we will consider the use of legal sanctions.

13. LEGAL SANCTIONS

13.1 **Prosecution** Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

13.1.2 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

13.1.3 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

13.1.4 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

13.2. **Parenting Contracts** (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent. It can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

13.2.1 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

13.2.2 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

13.2.3 Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.

13.3 **Penalty Notices** (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence without reasons provided and/or accepted as exceptional by the Headteacher.

13.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

13.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

13.3.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day