



POLICY TITLE: Attendance Policy

Persons with Responsibility:

Amy Rogers (Principal)
Katy Nesbitt (Welfare & Inclusion Manager)

Documents consulted:

This policy and procedure has been produced based on recommendations from Oxfordshire County Council.

Policy History:

Issue No.	Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Next Review Date
3	September 2020	AR	Updated in light of Covid-19 Restrictions	September 2022
2	September 2019	AR and KN	Replaces Attendance Policy	September 2020

Introduction

Dashwood Banbury Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year we will examine our attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

At Dashwood Banbury Academy we are committed to reviewing our systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that we are achieving our set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that we will use to meet our attendance targets.

Promoting Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Newsletters;
- Report to you at least 3 times a year on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and events;
- Run attendance focus weeks such as visits from the Attendance Clock when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Attendance Awards

We will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:

- Certificates given to pupils that have achieved 100% attendance termly
- End of academic year prize for children who have achieved 100% attendance
- Class awards for attendance

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, we will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day

- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

School Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (C, I, M, B, P, J, R), unauthorised (O, G) or as an approved educational activity (V, W) (attendance out of school). These codes are available on www.gov.uk as approved by the Government.
2. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at **08.30 am** for part-time Nursery pupils, 9 am for 30 hour places and **08.50 am** for Reception to Year 6 pupils and we expect your child to be in class at that time. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes.
2. In line with safeguarding procedures, any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed (L).
3. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at

Afternoon Nursery session: 12.10 pm

Reception: 12.20 pm

Years 1 and 2: 12.45 pm

Years 3 and 4: 1.15 pm

Years 5 and 6: 1.30 pm

The registers will close at **30 minutes after registration.**

4. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.

5. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

Absence from School

First Day Absence

- Parent/carer to call school by 9 am at the latest on **every** day that the child is absent. The telephone number is 01295 263240.
- If no call is received, a member of staff will attempt to make contact (please ensure that the office has up to date contact numbers).
- In certain circumstances, such as after a school holiday, staff may conduct a home visit.

Second Day Absence & Continuing Absence

- Parents/carers are expected to contact school daily, if no contact is made the school office will attempt to make contact each day of absence.
- If no contact can be made, a letter will be sent home requesting contact.
- School staff will conduct a home visit if contact cannot be made with pupil and parents/carers.
- School may ask for proof of ill health (e.g. Doctor's certificate).

Pupil Missing

- Any pupil who is absent without an explanation after 10 consecutive school days and the school are unable to make contact with the family must be referred to the police to conduct a home visit. (If the school is concerned for a child's safety, referrals to the Police will occur sooner.)
- Pupils missing from school for 20 consecutive days may be passed to the County Tracking Officer and removed from the school role.
- If the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare, the Police or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub may be contacted immediately regardless of the number of day's absence.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence and Persistent Lateness

It is the responsibility of the Inclusion & Welfare Manager to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, we will try to resolve any concerns with parents/carers. The Principal or Inclusion & Welfare Manager will liaise with the County Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

Parents/carers are expected to contact us at this early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, we may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.”

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to have time off school to go on holiday.

As of 1st September 2013, the Principal will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Principal prior to the leave of absence period in question. **All parents/carers will receive a letter during the first 3 weeks of the school year outlining this and the consequences of removing their child from school without authorisation.**

The Principal will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

The Staff responsible for attendance at Dashwood Banbury Academy are:

Amy Rogers – Principal
Katy Nesbitt – Welfare & Inclusion Manager
Ruth Jakeman – Business Manager

Covid-19 Restrictions (in place during the pandemic only)

At Dashwood, we are committed to ensuring the pupils and staff wellbeing and safety. During the coronavirus pandemic, attendance procedures will be followed in light of government requirements and guidance. Adaptations to the policy will be made accordingly through letters sent to parents. No pupils or staff will be penalised for missing school due to the requirement to stay at home as they have been directed to due to:

- Test and trace contacts
- Displaying symptoms of Covid-19 or a family member doing so
- Isolating due to contacts linked to Covid-19 or travel restrictions after a school holiday
- Lockdown preventing pupils from attending school.

Where possible, all other attendance procedures will remain and pupils will not be authorised to attend holidays in school time. Our reward systems will however be placed on hold until the situation stabilises.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

Dashwood Banbury Academy prides itself on communication well with all parents/carers.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.