



Date	Section	Amendment
Jan22	Introduction	Addition of Rights Respecting statement
Jan22	Headings	Inclusion of Intent / Implementation / Impact
October 22	Procedure	Addition of procedure / letters
October 22	Intent	Added clarity around our Attendance aims

Attendance Management (Pupils) Policy

Intent

Our vision, our values and our rights underpin all of our policies and the education we deliver. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that: “The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions that affect children”. This policy has been created to keep the children at Delamere School safe and happy.

We have developed a whole school policy on attendance in discussion with staff, governors, parents and pupils taking account of relevant guidance issued by the Department for Education and good practice identified by the Trafford Council.

We recognise that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion and a prerequisite to effective learning. We note that for a small but significant number of children poor school attendance is a direct cause of their social exclusion and underachievement.

However some pupils have complex/severe/profound medical needs and conditions that impact upon their potential to sustain regular attendance.

We believe that wherever possible children should attend school regularly and punctually because school is where they learn and school is where they are safe.

We are therefore committed to improving levels of school attendance and punctuality. We aim to do this by:-

- promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance;
- reducing all forms of unjustified absenteeism, especially levels of persistent absenteeism. (A child is classified as being a persistent absentee if he/she has an absence rate of 10% or more).

We set a range of attendance and absence targets, including statutory and non-statutory, and incorporate these into our plans.

We believe that success in achieving these targets will be best achieved if principles of active and meaningful partnership (with parents, pupils and other agencies and services) inform all our activities.

Our aim for ALL children is to achieve an attendance rate of 95% or higher.

We monitor attendance figures each half term. Throughout each stage of the following process we offer support to the parent/carers and the opportunity to discuss any issues.

Implementation

Our Responsibilities

In order to improve levels of school attendance and punctuality we will:

Adopt a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourage parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children, as this can play a major role in improving levels of attendance and punctuality and in reducing absenteeism.

It is a legal requirement that we will:-

1. be open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year;
2. maintain attendance registers (either manual or computerised) in accordance with the relevant regulations (see Appendix 1);
3. accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness;
4. clearly distinguish between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the Department of Education (schools should remind parents that it is the decision of the Headteacher as to whether or not an absence will be authorised);
5. submit termly absence returns through School Census and publish information relating to levels of attendance and absence and include details of these in the school's prospectus and annual report;
6. set annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations.

In addition to the above we will:

- give a high priority and value to attendance and punctuality and ensures that specific strategies are in place in order to achieve this;
- ensure compliance with all relevant statutory requirements (particularly with regard to the maintenance of attendance registers and the setting of targets);
- ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents through newsletters, through parents' consultations or through other media such as the School Website and social media; (parents should be specifically reminded of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance);
- collect and make effective use of attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement – for individuals, classes, year groups and the whole school;
- provide clear guidance to staff on the practice of registration and on such connected issues as the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- identify clear admin procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness from the first day. (see section below)
- recognise the crucial importance of early intervention and providing appropriate strategies;
- identify a range of both proactive and reactive strategies to promote attendance and address absenteeism, especially persistent absenteeism;
- develop attendance incentive schemes which recognise pupils' attendance achievements;

- sets up effective networks for liaising with other involved agencies and services such as the Pupil Absence Team (formally Education Welfare officers, EWOs), Social Care, Health etc;
- establish procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees and pupils who may, for specific reasons, have been on a reduced timetable;
- identify an interesting, flexible, and accessible curriculum which encourages regular attendance;
- ensure that reasonable steps are taken by the school before a referral is made to the Pupil Absence Team.
- stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time (schools should grant leave for term-time holidays sparingly, if at all);
- involve and identify a role for governors;
- identify a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance (Headteacher)
- ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated;
- ensure this policy is regularly monitored and reviewed;

Procedure around Absence & Lateness

First Day of absence

- Registers close at 9.30am and 1.30pm daily.
- If any child has not been registered by these times & we have not had contact from home, we will contact parents to ascertain the reason for absence.
- ALL children will have 2 contact numbers registered with school.
- In situations where we cannot make contact with home, a member of the school senior leadership team will visit the child's home.
- If we are still unable to make contact with the family, we will make a referral to First Response.

Stage 1 – Raising Awareness

If a pupil's attendance drops below 96% we will send out Step 1 letter (appendix 2) The purpose of this letter is to raise the parent/carers awareness of their child's attendance.

Stage 2 – Noting attendance as a concern

If a pupil's attendance has improved, we will send out an improvement letter (appendix 3).

If a pupil's attendance has remained at the same level or dropped further

- a) The Family Liaison officer will phone the parent/carer to inform them of this, that they will receive a letter and discuss any issues
- b) We will send out a stage 2 letter (appendix 4). The purpose of this letter is to inform the parent/carer that we are concerned about their child's attendance and the impact this is having on their child's learning and achievement.

Stage 3 – Meeting with the Headteacher

As stage 2 if attendance has improved we will send out an improvement letter.

If a pupil's attendance has remained the same or continued to drop we will send out a Stage 3 letter (Appendix 5) inviting the parent/carer in for a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss their child's attendance and look for ways to support.

Stage 4

If none of the above has resulted in improvements in the child's attendance we will refer to the Pupil Absence Team.

Responsibilities of parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:-

1. take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
2. attend parents' evenings and other school events;
3. ensure that their child completes his/her homework and goes to bed at an appropriate time;
4. be aware of letters from school which their child brings home;
5. ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
6. ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
7. always notify the school as soon as possible - on the first morning - of any absence;
8. confirm this in writing / email / phonecall when the child returns to school;
9. avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
10. talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend.

The role of Pupil Absence Team

The fundamental purpose of Pupil Absence officers (PAOs) is to maximise attendance rates for individual pupils, individual schools and for the borough as a whole and to discharge the Borough's legal duty to ensure that all pupils of compulsory school age are in receipt of suitable education. PAOs will also assist in removing barriers which may prevent a child receiving education.

PAOs will employ three main interconnected and interdependent strategies to ensure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually:-

1. as authorised representatives of Trafford Council, monitoring attendance through the regular inspection of registers and liaison with school staff;
2. undertaking individual casework with non-attending pupils and their parents;
3. offering strategic advice, support and challenge to enable schools to develop improved systems and practices for managing attendance.

Penalty Notices

The Local Authority has brought to the attention of every school in Trafford the powers in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle poor attendance.

This means that the Pupil Absence Team can issue Penalty Notices for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. absence that the school has not given permission for).

The Penalty Notice will be issued by post to a pupil's home, after one warning letter. Cases of unauthorised absence include, persistent late attendance after the register has closed and unauthorised holiday. In the case of unauthorised holiday a Penalty Notice may be issued straight away without a warning letter.

Penalty Notices provide an alternative to prosecution under s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 any payment within 28 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice is £50 and if it remains unpaid after 28 days the amount will increase to £100. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 42 days, the case will progress to the Magistrates Court for the original offence of poor attendance – this can mean a fine of up to £2500.

At Delamere School we consider that regular attendance is so important and these powers so significant that we are now bringing this legislation to the attention of every parent/carer.

It means that any parent/carer of a pupil with a level of unauthorised absence may now be issued with a Penalty Notice by the Pupil Absence Team.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence record from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you take action to secure their regular attendance.

Support and guidance is always available from the school and the Pupil Absence Team. If you have any questions regarding Penalty Notices or any other attendance issues, please do not hesitate to contact us.

PAT Referrals

Referrals to PAOs are usually made by schools. There are, however, occasions when other agencies/services or parents may make a referral.

Before accepting a referral from a school an PAO will expect the school to have first undertaken a number of steps to address the pupil's non-attendance. These would include:-

1. action by the class teacher/form teacher;
2. action by senior management
3. contact with parents; PAOs encourage schools to work to a '3-letter system', the use of which involves the school sending a sequence of letters of concern to the parents before formally involving the PAO.

The overwhelming majority of referrals to PAOs are made on the basis of non-attendance

Referrals will usually only be accepted in relation to absence which has not been authorised by the school. (Only in exceptional circumstances will referrals in relation to authorised absence be accepted).

Referrals may be made when:-

1. a pattern of irregular attendance has developed;
2. a period of entrenched non-attendance has begun;
3. communication by the school to the parents has met with little or no response;
4. there is evidence of a lack of parental co-operation in ensuring a child's regular attendance;
5. a parent withdraws a pupil from school having expressed an intention to educate him or her otherwise than at school (Elective Home Education);
6. a pupil is withdrawn from school by the parents who are moving to another area and the school does not have a confirmed destination school/provider where the child will resume his or her education (such pupils will be treated as "children missing education");
7. a pattern of persistent lateness has developed;
8. there are child protection concerns;
9. there are specific and identifiable welfare issues which are preventing a pupil from accessing education.

All referrals to PAOs are recorded on the central Database. This database is used in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Impact

Both overall school average attendance and individual pupil average attendance remains at 95% or above wherever possible.

Appendix 1

KEY DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Advice and Guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Pupil Attendance - DfES Circular 2005

Missing Out: LEA Management of School Attendance and Exclusion - Audit Commission 1999

Improving School Attendance in England – National Audit Office 2005

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Absence and Attendance Codes DfES 2006

Keeping Pupil Registers DCSF 2007

Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Secondary Schools - Ofsted 2001

Ensuring Regular School Attendance. Guidance on the Legal Measures Available to Secure Regular School Attendance – DCSF 2007

Guidance on Education-Related Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices – DfES 2004

Appendix 2 – Step 1 letter

Dear Parents

In line with Government Guidance in place from September 2022: –

Working Together to Improve School Attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

we have a responsibility to monitor pupil Attendance and inform Parents / Carers whenever it falls below our agreed aim of 95% or above for all children.

As a Rights Respecting School we uphold Article 28 of the UN Convention of Children's Rights:-
Every child has the right to an education.

On Date , xxxx attendance was only xxx which means that he/she has had xxx days of absence since September.

Regular attendance is important to help your child achieve and reach their potential.

If you feel that school can offer any support, please make an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 3 – Improvement letter

Dear Parents

When reviewing pupils attendance on,attendance currently stands at xxxx %, which means that he has had xx days of absence since xxxxx

I am really pleased to see an improvement xxxxx attendance since my last letter, and I acknowledge the efforts you have made in this area.

This letter is a reminder to keep working towards our target of 95% attendance as anything below this remains a concern and could be followed up by the Pupil Absence Team.

Regular attendance is important to help your child achieve and reach their potential.

If you feel that school can offer any support, please make an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 4 – Stage 2 letter

Dear xxxx

Please find enclosed your child's latest Attendance Report. You will see that xxxx attendance is only xxxx %, which means that he / she has had xxx days of absence since September.

As discussed during the phonecall with Elizabeth Johnson (Family Liaison Officer) this means attendance has not improved since our last letter in xxxxxx.

Regular attendance is important to help your child achieve and reach their potential.

If you feel that school can offer any support, please make an appointment through the school office.

We will formally review again in xxxxxxxx.

If attendance has not improved, a meeting in school will be arranged with myself to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 5 – Stage 3 letter

Dear Parents.

With reference to my previous letter in xxxxxx regarding absences for xxxx we are disappointed to note that the level of attendance has not improved.

Your child has now had a total of xxxx days of absence which will affect his/her learning and achievement.

Please find enclosed your child's attendance report.

As your child's attendance is a cause for concern, we have scheduled a meeting in school on xxxxxxxx in order that this matter can be discussed further.

If you do not attend this meeting and your child's attendance does not improve we will have no alternative but to make a referral to the Pupil Absence Team at Trafford Local Authority.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting and are confident we can work together to improve xxxxxx's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher