

# DHEKELIA PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## **School Attendance Policy**

### **Principles**

We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children. Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled and as a result achieve their full potential. We recognise the link between attendance and good learning and endeavour to work in partnership with all parents and carers to uphold and reinforce this message to impact on the outcomes for our pupils. As a school we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Our policy is founded on our core values of happiness, compassion, respect, responsibility, achievement and independence.

### **Safeguarding**

Dhekelia Primary School fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Through their day-to-day contact with pupils and direct work with families, staff at the school play a crucial role in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to SSAFA, and Senior Educational Social Worker, Pupil and Family Services.

### **Legal Requirements**

The law (The Education Act 1996 & Pupil Registration Regulations 2013) requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Schools should follow up on absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised;
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on the school's electronic register.

The Government expects:

- Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive to school on time.
- Schools and local authorities to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
  - Act early to address patterns of absence.

Our Home-school agreement informs parents/carers that we expect them to:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of any absence;
- Notify school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details.

As a school we will:

- Provide a welcome atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality; monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- Inform parents of their child's attendance and punctuality on the termly report format and when an absence request is submitted;
- Ensure that this policy and the schools' procedures for absence requests are published and accessible on our school website.

### **Registers, Punctuality and Lateness**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

Parents should refer to the school prospectus which they will be given on admission, and is also available on the website, for full details regarding school timings for different phases.

### **School Gates**

School gates open at 0745 in the morning and will be locked at 1500 in the afternoon. It is the responsibility of the School Caretaker to ensure that gates are unlocked/locked at the times stated.

### **Foundation Stage 1**

All Foundation Stage 1 children should arrive at school promptly for the start of their allocated three hour session. The register will be open between 0800-0805. If a child arrives after this time they will be marked late in the register.

### **Foundation Stage 2 and Key Stage 1**

All Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 children should arrive at school between 0745 and 0755 when the bell will signal the start of their school day. **Registration in Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 will close at 0800.**

Any child arriving after 0800 will be marked as late in the register and receive an **L** code in the register.

### **Key Stage 2**

All Key Stage 2 children should arrive at school between 0745-0755 when the register will open. Children in Key Stage 2 must go straight into class on arrival ready for an 0755 registration. **Registration for Key Stage 2 will close at 0755.**

Any child arriving after 0800 will be marked as late and receive an **L** code in the register.

If a child arrives at school after the close of registration they should be escorted by their parent to the school office and sign in to the late book stating the reason for the lateness and the time. If a child is more than half an hour later than the opening time for registration then they will receive a **U** code in the register. A **U** code equates to an unauthorised absence for that session and will count towards their annual attendance which will be reported on the child's annual school report.

### **Persistent Lateness**

The school follows a three step system for children who are persistently late:

Step 1 - When a child is considered to be persistently late (this is at the discretion of their class teacher, the school Attendance Officer and/or the head teacher) then the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child's persistent lateness and the school's concerns.

Step 2 - If a child continues to be persistently late the school will send a second letter to the parents/carers requesting a meeting to discuss the matter and see if there are any ways in which the school can help.

Step 3 - In the event that the child's punctuality still does not improve then the school will refer the matter to the relevant Unit Welfare or Head of Establishment.

### **Other Reasons for Absence**

From time to time children need to be absent from school for other reasons such as medical appointments. Such absences usually only take up part of a day. School should be informed of such absences in writing in advance and children should be brought in to school for morning registration and back to school straight after the appointment. Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours where possible. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If a parent informs school that their child has a medical appointment first thing in the morning i.e. between 0800 – 0830 then the appropriate code will be recorded in the register to indicate this.

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 school informing the chain of command of concerns; if a child fails to attend school regularly, without lawful excuse, the parent will be guilty of an offence and may face disciplinary action.

### **Authorised Absences**

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.

Parents/carers should notify the school before 0830 on the first school day of his/her child's absence from school. If any child is absent and the school has not been notified, the home liaison clerk will call the family. In the event that contact could not be made the home liaison clerk will record this on the register. If there are any child welfare / safety concerns then the matter may be referred to the Unit Welfare team and/or Social Services. Examples of authorised absences are:

- Illness;
- Religious observance by the religious body to which the child's family belongs;

Absences allowed by the school. These would usually include:

- medical appointments;
- exclusions;
- extreme family emergencies/occasions such as bereavement.

### **Holidays During Term Time**

In April 2013 the government issued amendments to 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Therefore our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstance will only be agreed very rarely.

Parents should apply by completing the form available from the school office or through our website if they are considering a holiday in term time. All requests must be signed by the Unit Welfare Team before being submitted to the school. This should be done at least 3 weeks before the holiday is planned. The school will consider the request and let parents know in writing whether it has been authorised.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy;
- Unexplained absences;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- Looking after other children/ birthdays or staying home with visitors;
- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by the school.

Whilst any child may be off school because of illness, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regards to attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will seek to take action immediately.

Joint Services Publication (JSP) 342, Chapter 4, Paragraph 4.1 states that: 'It is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that that child receives efficient fulltime education. Failure to ensure that a child of school age receives efficient education will be referred to the Commanding Officer where the parent is a member of the Services or to the parent's Head of Establishment in the case of other entitled persons.'

### **Monitoring**

The School Governance Committee (SGC) is responsible for monitoring the impact of this policy and the head teacher will report attendance figures termly as part of their report to governors.

This policy has been written with reference to the following:

- The schools core values;
- The Education Act (1996);
- Pupil registration regulations (2013);
- School attendance – departmental advice for maintained schools (October 2014);
- DCYP Policy Directive - Attendance in MOD Schools (September 2016).

**Summary of procedures to promote good attendance/punctuality:**

Daily Procedures	By whom	Outcomes/action
Parents ensure pupils arrive at school on time	Parents/carers	
Parents inform the school by 0830 if their child is absent that day	Parents/carers	Home liaison clerk to follow up and update registration codes
Pupils arriving later to school are registered in school office late book	Pupils/parents	Absence mark on the school Information Management System (Integris) by Home Liaison Clerk
Teachers record attendance in paper register. Attendance recorded on schools Information Management System	Teachers  HL Clerk	Teacher responsible for taking register promptly
First day absence phone calls are made to ask parents about their child's unexplained absence for that day	HL Clerk	HL Clerk updates attendance codes

Weekly procedures	By whom	Outcomes/action
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced by year group	HL Clerk	Monitor attendance
Attendance statistics shared on school newsletter - Grapevine	School secretary	Parents able to see which class(es) have been successful with their attendance
Absence codes for individual pupils are updated using Integris to show reason for absence	HL Clerk	Information provided here is used to provide targeted interventions as appropriate

Half termly and termly procedures	By whom	Outcomes/action
Analyse attendance punctuality to monitor trends and progress	HT	
Discussions as required in response to specific attendance/punctuality concerns of a particular cohort of pupils	HT / Class teacher	
Individual attendance/punctuality discussed with pupils and families at parent's evenings	Class Teachers	Mentoring and advice on attendance/punctuality issues provided to all families

Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions	HT/DHT	Targeted intervention for individual concerns
Meeting to discuss individual cases monitor progress and refer new concerns.	HT/DHT	
Review success and impact of attendance/punctuality strategies for the term	HT/DHT/HL Clerk	Amend and refine interventions as appropriate