

# Date Valley School

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## Attendance Policy

### **Key Points:**

- 1) Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education, In Shaa Allah.
- 2) Registered children of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school. Compulsory school age begins the term after the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- 3) The school day consists of two sessions, thus meaning if a child has been absent for one day, due to illness, he / she will incur two code I's. (See Appendix 1)
- 4) The Government expects:
  - Schools and local authorities to:
    - a) promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
    - b) ensure every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
    - c) act early to address patterns of absence
  - Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly, and are punctual to their lessons
  - All schools to inform their local authority if a child (of compulsory school age) has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days (20 sessions) or more. (See Appendix 2 for further notes on notifying the local authority)
- 5) Date Valley expects regular and punctual attendance, even when it is known the family or children are facing problems or difficulties.
- 6) This policy is available for parents to read on the school website. New parents are informed of the policy during the induction procedure.
- 7) Internal audits within school should ensure the registers are kept accurately as may be used in evidence in cases where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences.

### **Parents' Responsibilities:**

- 1) Parents and those with parental responsibilities are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. This means that they are responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made.
- 2) Parents are also responsible for informing the school of any absence as soon as possible, ideally on the first day of absence. They should state the nature of the absence and when the child is expected to return to school. Telephone calls and email notification are acceptable methods of communication.

### **Lateness:**

#### Morning Drop off:

- 1) Lateness is discouraged as it is very disruptive to the class. Consistent lateness will not be acceptable.

2) Primary children are considered late if arriving after 9.00am. The Primary registers will close at 9.15am and children arriving after the register has closed will be marked absent with code U, which equates to an unauthorised absence.

3) Reception children are considered late if arriving after 9.15am. The Reception register will close at 9.30am and children of compulsory school age arriving after the register has closed will be marked absent with code U, which equates to an unauthorised absence.

4) Nursery children are considered late if arriving after 9.15am, 12.15pm for those attending afternoon sessions. After three morning late drop offs (per term) parents will be called to meet with the Head of Early Years to discuss persistent lateness.

#### Afternoon collection:

5) Late mid-day and afternoon collections will be noted down and the parent will need to sign the late book even if a phone call has been received informing of the late pick up. After three late pick up entries (per term) a £10 penalty charge (per family) will be payable.

6) Primary children are considered late if collection occurs after 3.25pm, (12.15pm when the school closes at 12.00pm).

7) Early Years children are considered late if collection occurs after 3.15pm, (12.15pm for those attending morning sessions when the school closes at 12.00pm).

### **Absence and Attendance Codes:**

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, which complies with the regulations.

#### **1) Marking Codes:**

- Present in school: / = am \ = pm
- **J**: An interview / test / appointment or induction at another educational establishment
- **L**: Late arrival before the register has closed
- **N**: Reason for absence not yet provided (temporary code)
- **P**: Participating in a supervised sporting activity eg Sports Day
- **V**: Educational Visit or Trip
- **Y**: Unable to attend due exceptional circumstances eg local or national emergency
- **#**: Planned whole or partial school closure eg Bank Holidays during term time

#### **2) Authorised Absence Codes:**

- **C**: Leave of absence authorised by the school
- **E**: Excluded but no alternative provision made for their education (first five days of exclusion)
- **H**: Holiday authorised by the school
- **I**: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- **K**: Exclusion in breach of the Parking and Traffic Management Policy
- **M**: Medical or dental appointments
- **R**: Religious observance
- **T**: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

#### **3) Unauthorised Absence Codes:**

- **G**: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Head Teacher
- **O**: Absent from school without permission

- **U**: Arrived in school after registration closed

Detailed explanation of the codes and how they are used can be found in the appendix, In Shaa Allah.

### **Minimising Absences:**

Even where an absence is authorised, the school will be alert to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning.

- Stage 1: Per term, upon receiving the 6<sup>th</sup> code (3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence) from ANY of the following codes: **M, G, O, and U** a written warning will be sent home
- Stage 2: Following receipt of a further 4 codes (within the same term) from ANY of the following codes: **M, G, O and U** the parent will be called to meet with the Attendance Officer.
- Stage 3: Following receipt of a further 4 codes (within the same term) from codes: **M, G, O and U** the parent will incur a penalty charge of £60 (per child).
- Stage 4: Should persistent absence continue after Stage 3, the parent will be called to meet with the Head Teacher, wherein the use and implementation of a Parenting contract will be discussed.

Should persistent absence continue following the above mentioned stages the local authority will be contacted.

Per term, upon receiving the 10<sup>th</sup> code **I** (5<sup>th</sup> day of absence) the parent will be called to meet with the Attendance Officer.

Per term, upon receiving the 5<sup>th</sup> code **L** the parent will be called to meet with the Attendance Officer.

Parents requesting absence under codes C and H, are required to seek permission directly from the Head Teacher via email. Parents are required to specify the reason for the leave, the duration of the leave and why the leave can not be taken out of term term.

This policy has been read and approved for Date Valley School, by the School Principal and the Date Valley Trust Policy Committee.

Date: June 2015

### **Appendix 1:**

**Notes taken from ‘School Attendance – Statutory guidance and departmental advice, August 2013’**

### **Marking Codes:**

### Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

### Registration Code /\: Present in school:

/ = am \ = pm; Present in school during registration.

### Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed.

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

### Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

### Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

### Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

### Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation)

### Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

### Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

### **Authorised Absence Codes:**

### Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave

is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

#### Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

#### Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

#### Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the legitimacy of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.

Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

#### Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

#### Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

#### Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller— Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

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 school.

### **Unauthorised Absence Codes:**

#### Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the

absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

**General Notes for Reference:**

- Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices are interventions available to promote better school attendance and behaviour. Good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects.
- Parenting contracts, orders and penalty notices for irregular attendance apply only to pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school.
- Local authorities also have other powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order, or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.
- Local authorities and schools using parenting contracts, parenting orders or penalty notices need to ensure that parents affected have access to clear, accurate information, including about their own rights and responsibilities.
- Definition of a parent: A parent means; All natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.
- The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.
- Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).
- A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.
- If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.
- A parenting contract is a formal written signed agreement between parents and either the local authority or the school and should contain:
  - 1) A statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract
  - 2) A statement by the local authority or the school agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract
  - 3) Parenting contracts can be used in cases of misbehaviour or irregular attendance at school or alternative provision
  - 4) Parenting contracts are voluntary but any non-compliance should be recorded by the school or local authority as it may be used as evidence in court where an application is made for a behaviour parenting order
- Parenting orders are imposed by the court and the parents' agreement is not required before an order is made.

**Appendix 2:**

**Notes taken from 'Guidance for completing the school information and self-evaluation form - June 2014 - , Bridge Schools Inspectorate'**

All schools, including independent schools, are required to inform the local authority of the full name and address of any registered child of compulsory school age who fails to attend the school regularly, or who has been absent without authorisation for a period of more than ten school days, specifying the cause of absence if it is known.

This requirement does not apply if the irregular attendances or the prolonged absences are because the child is attending another school at which the child is registered, or because the child is attending an approved educational activity.

In addition, all schools, including independent schools, are required to inform the local authority about any child of compulsory school age who is to be deleted from the school's admission register for one of the following reasons:

- that the child has ceased to attend the school and the school has been informed in writing by the parents that the child is receiving education otherwise than at school
- that a child has ceased to attend the school and no longer lives locally
- that a child is so ill that the school does not think that the child will be fit enough to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and the school has not been informed of any intention to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- that the child is in custody for at least four months and there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the child will return to the school at the end of the period
- that the child has been permanently excluded

In these cases, the school must give the local authority the full name of the child, the address of any parent with whom the child normally resides and the grounds on which the child is to be deleted from the admission register. The information must be given as soon as the grounds for deletion are met and before the child is deleted from the admission register.