



ATTENDANCE POLICY

DANEHILL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reviewed – November 2015, November 2016
Next review – Autumn 2018

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Danehill Church of England Primary School

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Danehill CEP School by:

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Incorporating our key Christian values.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to 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 may make things worse.

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ ***parents 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***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Education Authority. The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

Sickness

Parents are asked to ring the school office and report child absence as early as possible (8.30am). They are able to leave a message on answerphone before school hours. Parents should ring in and inform school of sickness before 09:00am. Messages from children will not be accepted.

If parents have not contacted the school on the first day of illness then the office will contact the parents to establish the pupils whereabouts and reason for absence.

If parents cannot be contacted at home, their emergency number contacts will be tried until the children's whereabouts are learnt. If the location of the child cannot be established within three days, the Education Welfare Service is to be contacted who will follow up with further enquiries.

There is no need to ring on consecutive days of the illness.

This procedure is to make sure that children who have left home for school have arrived safely and are under our care. It should alert everyone very quickly if there is a problem.

When the child returns to school, a letter stating the reason for absence is preferable, for the register records.

If a letter is not received after the child's return, a reminder letter is sent home requesting a reason for absence.

If a reason for the absence continues to be outstanding then the situation will be passed to the Headteacher, who will decide the next course of action.

Any absence without a supporting letter must be recorded by the school as unauthorised.

By law, absences in registers must be allocated to specific categories.

Lateness

The outside school doors and gates will be locked at 8.55am, children who arrive late must come to the main front office to be signed in the late book.

Office staff will use appropriate code in register to report late arrival (If arriving before 09:15, a registration mark of L will be applied; if after 09:15, then a mark of U will be applied)and monitor persistent late arrivals (recording number of minutes late when appropriate)

Persistent Absence and Lateness:

At the end of each term, if a child has five or more late marks in the register or their attendance is less than 90% the reasons why are to be established and passed to the Headteacher. This level of attendance is classed as 'persistent' and will normally result in a letter home to outline the cause of lateness/absence and remind parents that this level of attendance is a concern.

Holidays In Term Time

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school disrupts children's learning.

The Department for Education allows a Headteacher discretion to consider authorising a holiday in term time, only in 'exceptional circumstances'. Exceptional circumstances include: family bereavement or prolonged family illness, family wedding, religious festivals, formal educational activities.

If parents consider their request for a holiday is exceptional then they should collect and complete a holiday form from the office.

If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance and the parent takes their child out of school for the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

In the case of an unauthorised holiday, the Behaviour and Attendance Service will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty notice may be issued. This Penalty relates to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty notice is currently a fine of £60 per pupil for each parent, which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 28 days. Thereafter, if the Penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action.

All holiday requests must be completed on the appropriate form (Appendix 1), letters will not be accepted. This should be returned at least 14 days before the start of the proposed holiday.

Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be taken in school time.

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Danehill CEP school aims to always maintain attendance figures in line or better than Local Authority and National Averages and keep attendance in line or better than each previous year (2014 -2015 attendance was 96.7% and lateness 0.18%).

Danehill CEP currently uses the Cool Cats Attendance Scheme to help keep attendance high.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Nicci Cronin (Secretarial Assistant)

Karen Page (School Business Manager)

Brad Falconer (Headteacher)

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school and are punctual. School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.