



# **Devonshire Infant & Junior Academy**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Mission Statement**

Devonshire Junior Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards that acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Devonshire Junior Academy will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

### **Statements of expectations;**

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

### **What is expected of the pupils?**

- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

### **What is expected of the Parents?**

- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence – and every subsequent day they are absent
- To contact school by 9am on the first and each subsequent day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, a reason should be offered for any lateness
- To work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special/exceptional circumstances. Requests MUST be submitted at least 2 weeks before departure
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especial vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### **What is expected of the School?**

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum

School will operate the following First Day Calling Procedure for each day a child is not in school:

1. Initial text to ALL absentees by 9.30am
2. By 10am – anyone who has not replied, will be called by telephone – each number on the child's contact list will be called until a response is obtained
3. If there is no response, school staff will continue texting/calling periodically. For any families classed as particularly vulnerable, a home visit by school staff will be considered.

## **Overall Aims**

1. To improve the overall percentage of pupils at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework that defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and with other services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

## **To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School**

1. Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
3. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
4. Monitor progress in attendance measurable outcomes.

## **To Develop a Framework Which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in**

### **Carrying Out Designated Tasks**

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
2. Make phone/letter contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
4. Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
5. Appoint an Attendance leader within the school.
6. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
7. Have clear procedures prior to referral to Education Social Workers.
8. Review attendance regularly.

## **To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils**

1. Highlight attendance in:
  - PSHE
  - Assemblies
  - Staff available to talk to pupils
  - 'Mentors' system
  - Parents evening
2. Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
3. Seek improved communication with parents e.g. when parents ring in.
4. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
5. Involve pupils and parents from earliest stage.

### **To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data**

1. Standardise recording of:
  - authorised/unauthorised absence
  - educational activity
  - presence
  - illness
2. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.
3. Decide what information, if any, is provided for:
  - governors
  - pastoral staff
  - other school staff
  - parents
  - pupils (individual or groups)
  - education social work service
4. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

### **To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication Between Home and School**

1. Initiate first day absence contact.
2. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls/texts from parents.
3. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships.
4. Provide information in a user-friendly way
5. Encourage all parents into school.

### **To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions**

1. Identify finance for a system of rewards.
2. Actively promote attendance and associated reward and effective sanctions.
3. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
4. Involve pupils in system evaluation.
5. Make use of imaginative and immediate sanctions.
6. Take action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others, e.g. Education Social Worker, parent, Behaviour Support Service.

### **To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Social work Service and with Other services and**

#### **Agencies**

1. Designated key staff, Office staff/learning mentors, for liaison with Education Social Work Service and other agencies.
2. Give priority to timetabled meetings with Education Social Work Service.
3. Provide support to identified families through the family liaison worker
4. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
5. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Social Work Service.
6. Hold termly attendance review with key school staff and Education Social Work Service.
7. Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.

8. Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community e.g. community police contact officer.
9. Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
10. Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

### **To Recognise the Needs of the Individual Pupil When Planning Reintegration Following Significant Periods of Absence**

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
2. Involve/inform all staff in/or reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
4. Consider peer support and mentoring.
5. Involve parents as far as possible.
6. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
7. Include Education social workers, family liaison worker, parents and pupil in reintegration plan.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

The senior management team and the EWO will review the attendance of all the schools pupils on a termly basis and any pupils identified as cause for concern or less than 90% attendance on a more regular basis. A letter will be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a four week period there appears to be no improvement, the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the EWO and family support worker to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending. If the parent/s do not attend the meeting or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve a formal referral to the EWO will be made.

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues. The EWO will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to complete the leave of absence form and hand in to school. **This must be completed at least 2 weeks before departure.** If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Leave of absence will **not** be offered to pupils for family holidays except under special / exceptional circumstances.

### **Review**

The governing body reviews this policy every year. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.