

# Dane Bank Primary School



*"Enjoy and Achieve Together"*

## Attendance Policy

This Attendance Policy was reviewed and amended by Joanne Lennon, Acting Headteacher	<i>January 2022</i>
This Attendance Policy was approved by the Local Governing Committee in	<i>January 2022</i>
The Attendance Policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or more regularly in the light of any significant new developments. The next anticipated review date will be:	<i>January 2024</i>

## **Contents**

1.	Aims and Introductions	3
2.	Legal Framework	3
3.	Safeguarding	4
4.	Roles and Responsibilities	4
5.	Categorising Absence	6
6.	Persistent Absenteeism (PA)	8
7.	Deletions from the Register	8
8.	Using Attendance Data	9
9.	Support Systems	9
10.	Legal Interventions	10
11.	Coronavirus Considerations	11
	APPENDIX 1: Escalation of Intervention	12

*Dane Bank Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children. We expect our staff and volunteers to share this commitment – please see Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.*

## **1. Aims and Introduction**

Dane Bank Primary School recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards and attainment and ensuring that children achieve their full potential. This belief is in line with our statement of purpose: *“Enjoy and Achieve Together”*. We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to enjoy success and make a positive contribution to their community.

We value all pupils and, as set out in this policy, will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reasons creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **2. Legal Framework**

2.1 This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

2.2 This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2.3 The register must be taken in school twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again at the start of the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupils was: present, absent, present at approved educational activity; or, unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### **3. Safeguarding**

3.1 Every pupil should be able to learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure environment.

3.2 Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Effective safeguarding practice includes offering early help and support to children and families who may be experiencing difficulties.

3.3 Issues around attendance and punctuality may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered safeguarding matters if they place a child at risk of harm.

3.4 More information on safeguarding and child protection of children can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (available on the school website).

3.5 In order for us to safeguard the children in our care, it is important that parents and carers provide the school with current, up-to-date, contact details and that they inform the school of any specific vulnerability/changes in relation to their child or home circumstances.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

At Dane Bank Primary School we believe that good school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, Governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

#### **4.1 As such, the Local Governing Committee will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents.
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available for the full implementation of the policy.
- Ensure that all attendance-related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets, submit these to the Local Authority/Academy Trust within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate, link these to the Performance Management of the Senior Leadership within the school.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

#### **4.2 The Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named Senior Leader to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Committee
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated

#### **4.3 The Headteacher/Classroom Teachers/Pastoral Staff/Support Staff will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions as appropriate
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

#### **4.4 We request that Parents/Carers will:**

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there and take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a written explanation if requested.

- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Head Teacher.

## 5. Categorising Absence

5.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

5.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

5.3 Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. The school absence line has a voicemail available if absence is reported before the start of the school day. Follow up phone calls will be made if necessary.

### 5.4 **Absence will be categorised as follows:**

5.4.1 **Illness** - In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. In some cases, parents will receive a phone call/text message/letter to prompt communication with school, or an appointment may be made with the Headteacher

5.4.2 **Medical/Dental Appointments** - Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

5.4.3 **Other Authorised Circumstances** - This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

5.4.4 **Excluded (No alternative provision made)** - Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

### 5.4.5 **Family Holidays**

- From the 1st September 2013, the new legislation gives **no entitlement** to parents to take their child on holiday during the term time.

- Any exceptional circumstances are to be submitted in writing and will be referred to the Local Governing Committee/Academy Trust for consideration.
- The Headteacher is no longer able to authorise up to 10 days absence for the purpose of a holiday in term time.
- New law gives parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time.
- Requests for leave in term time should only be authorised in 'exceptional' circumstances.
- The DfE are anticipating that not many absences for leave in term time are authorised by schools

**5.4.6 Religious Observance** – Dane Bank Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, a religious festival may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this may lead to a request for an authorised absence from school. These requests should be put in writing to the Headteacher for consideration. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

**5.4.7 Late Arrival** - Registration begins at 8.55am, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.15 - pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (code U), this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

- On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.
- The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.
- The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

**5.4.8 Unauthorised Absence** - Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

**5.4.9** All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

5.4.10 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

5.4.11 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may issue a Penalty Notice.

### Expected First Day of Attendance

5.4.12 School must enter pupils on the admission register on the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for absence and mark the register accordingly. Schools must put in procedures for following these absences up. If school cannot establish contact with parents and the child has not attended school after 10 school days, school may consider reporting the child as being a Child Missing Education and will report this to Tameside MBC in line with statutory guidance.

## **6. Persistent Absenteeism (PA).**

6.1 A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and requires parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

6.2 We monitor all absence on a fortnightly/half-termly/termly basis. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform parents/carers within that half term.

6.3 Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic tracking because it is a proven fact that absence affects attainment.

## **7. Deletions from the Register**

7.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

7.2 Dane Bank Primary School will follow Tameside's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

## **8. Using Attendance Data**

8.1 Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

8.2 Every fortnight the Head Teacher receives attendance data for the whole school. The data is compared to our whole-school attendance target of 97%. The list for each class is presented in numerical descending order with the highest attainers at the top; every pupil will be colour coded as indicated below:

- Yellow: Excellent Attendance (between 100% and 98%)
- Green: Good Attendance (between 97% and 95%)
- Amber: Attendance requires improvement (between 94% and 91%)
- Red: Attendance is a cause for concern (90% or below)

8.3 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

8.4 Attendance data will also be used to trigger school action – as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).

8.5 Dane Bank Primary School will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the Local Authority as required.

8.6 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **9. Support Systems**

9.1 School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with school to support any pupils who may be experiencing anxiety-based school avoidance.

9.2 Dane Bank Primary School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with Special Educational Needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and Looked After Children.

9.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Parenting/attendance contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pupil Voice activities
- Friendship group support

- PSHE interventions using Jigsaw Curriculum materials
- Anxiety-based school avoidance materials
- Early Help referral support
- Time limited reduced timetables if appropriate
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support

9.4 Support offered to families will be child-centred and inclusive. It will be planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

9.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Dane Bank Primary School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## **10. Legal Interventions**

### **10.1 Prosecution**

10.1.1 Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

10.1.2 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

10.1.3 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

10.1.4 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

### **10.2 Parenting Contracts** (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

10.2.1 A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

10.2.2 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

10.2.3 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

10.2.4 Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Tameside Local Authority's Parenting Contract Protocol.

### **10.3 Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)**

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accrued unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in a 12 week period (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence)
- Further unauthorised absences have occurred following written warning to improve.

10.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 28 days or £120 if paid within 42 days of the date the Notice was issued.

10.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

10.3.3 Once a parent has discharged liability by paying a Penalty Notice on at least one occasion and where there are further unauthorised absences, they may not be given the option of paying a further Penalty Notice, but may instead be summoned to appear before Tameside Magistrate's Court to answer an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996: failure to ensure regular attendance. Conviction of an offence under section 444(1) may result in a fine of £1000.

10.3.4 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Tameside Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol.

## **11. Coronavirus (COVID) considerations to this policy**

11.1 The school appreciates that the prevalence of the COVID pandemic is having a significant impact on pupils' attendance at school and that attendance percentages may be lower than we would typically aim for/expect.

11.2 As a school, we follow all Government guidance regarding the COVID pandemic and follow the most recent School's Operational Guidance closely.

11.3 All COVID-related absences will be appropriately coded on the registers.

11.4 Attendance monitoring will still be undertaken as normal – however, when looking at pupils who may have fallen in to the Requires Improvement/Cause for Concern attendance category, individual registration certificates will be scrutinised to identify whether the absence are COVID-related.

11.5 Parents will still be contacted by school to confirm reasons for absence and to offer support. Advice will be made available if parents are unsure of how the COVID isolation guidance relates to pupils' attendance.

## **APPENDIX 1:**

### **Escalation of Intervention**

- Yellow: Excellent Attendance (between 100% and 98%)
- Green: Good Attendance (between 97% and 95%)
- Amber: Attendance requires improvement (between 94% and 91%)
- Red: Attendance is a cause for concern (90% or below)

8.3 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

8.4 Attendance data will also be used to trigger school action – as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).

**YELLOW:** Pupils with attendance between 100% and 98% (excellent)

- Parents will receive a letter home congratulating them on their child's excellent attendance.
- Pupils will receive a recognition certificate in assembly

**GREEN:** Pupils with attendance between 97% and 95% (good)

- Parents will receive a letter home informing them of their child's attendance and reminding them of the 97% whole-school attendance target.
- School Office staff/Headteacher continue to monitor attendance weekly and identify if there are drops in attendance.
- Class Teachers will follow up absence with pupils on return to school and offer any additional support needed.

**AMBER: Pupils with attendance between 94% and 91% (requires improvement)**

- Class Teacher will speak to the pupil to identify if there are any underlying issues at home/school that may be causing the pupil's absence. If necessary, the Class Teacher will produce a pastoral support plan to include support for attendance.
- Parents will receive an amber letter advising that their child's attendance requires improvement.
- Parents will be invited in to school to meet with the Headteacher to discuss attendance and possible support strategies that may help. An Attendance Improvement Plan will then be put in place and a review date will be set to discuss improvements/changes.
- If parents fail to attend the meeting (or contact school to change date/time as needed), the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.
- Consideration will be given as to whether a referral to the Early Help service is appropriate.

**RED: Pupils with attendance at 90% or below – persistent absence (cause for concern)**

Pupils who have attendance at 90% or below are considered to be persistently absent from school.

- Parents will receive a red letter advising that their child's attendance is now a cause for concern.
- The Headteacher will review any previous action undertaken to support with attendance if appropriate.
- Parents will be invited in to school to meet with the Headteacher to discuss attendance and possible support strategies that may help. An Attendance Improvement Plan will then be put in place.
- The Attendance Improvement Plan will be reviewed fortnightly via a meeting with

parents/school.

- The Key Stage Lead (SLT) will begin undertaking the first day phone calls if the child is absent so that discussions can be undertaken regarding the Attendance Improvement Plan.
- If parents fail to attend the meeting (or contact school to change date/time as needed), the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.
- Following parental consent, a referral to the Early Help service will be made.