

# Deyes High School



## Attendance Policy

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<b>AST</b>	<b>DHS BOARD</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2016/17</b>

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Introduction

**Deyes High School** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will students be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential pre requisites of successful learning. They are also an important training preparation for the world of work.

Deyes High will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Monitor regularly the attendance of all pupils and take action as and when appropriate.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents or carer, teachers and governors.
- Continue to develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole school attendance levels, the aim being to match or exceed the statutory targets [Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) 2005].

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Pupils' Responsibilities

All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their form teacher or head of year.

Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their form teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Students also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

All staff (teaching and support) at Deyes High School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

#### Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities

Ensure their son or daughter attend the school regularly;

Support their son or daughters attendance by keeping absence to a minimum;

Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Notify school on the first day of absence using the schools absence telephone line (0151 526 3814 option 1) or reporting to the school office.

Ensure their son or daughter arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day.

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### **Attendance Welfare Officer**

The Attendance Welfare Officer will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The AWO will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. Ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### **Registration**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and then in the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. The Attendance Officer will complete the registers using the prescribed codes.

#### REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
K	Admin use only	Present (reason for absence from class will be advised in comment box)
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances

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Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

The register will be called promptly at **8.45 am** and **1.10 pm** by the teacher a present mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each student.

The registers will close at **8.50 am** and **1.15 pm**. Any student who arrives **after** the closing of the register will need to sign in at reception. Any student arriving late but before the closing of the register will be marked as **late**.

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### **Categorising Absence**

A mark will be made in respect of each student following the close of the registers. Any student who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

Deyes High School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a student’s education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render students extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell. The Attendance Welfare Officer will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child’s absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student’s home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

### **The following absences will be categorised as authorised:**

- Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
- A student is to participate in an approved performance, for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- A student is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil’s overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- In **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance
- Where the school is satisfied that the student is too ill to attend;
- Where the student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their son or daughter to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand;

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- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions (school will advise parents in these circumstances);
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student / student's parents belong;
- In other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.
- Approved educational activity
- Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities.

**The following absences will be categorised as unauthorised:**

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the student or parents are staying at home to mind the house;
- the student or parents are shopping during school hours;
- the student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

**Staff Training**

The AWO will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

**Collection and analysis of data**

The AWO and Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection. Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and SIMS) within the stipulated time frame.

**Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

Attendance has a very high profile at Deyes High School. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

**First-day Calling**

Deyes High School has in place a system of first-day response. This means that parents will receive a text message or be telephoned on the first day if a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will try on the second day then any other contact student has will be phoned.

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## Persistent Absence

'Persistent absence' refers to absence of more than 10%, whether authorised or unauthorised. The Department for Children, Schools and Families state that students with persistent absence are often those unlikely to attain at school and stay in education after the age of 16 years. They are also significantly more likely to engage in anti-social behaviour and youth crime and are more at risk of other negative outcomes (including teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol abuse).

(DCSF – Improving attendance and Reducing Persistent Absence)

## Meetings with Parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks.

It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

## Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Attendance and Welfare Service.

Where unauthorised absence within a single term accounts for 10 sessions (5 days) or in two consecutive terms accounts for 18 sessions, the School will request a penalty notice for non-attendance from Sefton's Attendance and Welfare Service

## Lateness and Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class.

Students who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office and will be recorded in the "Late Book". They will then be marked as late.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the student has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

## Post-registration Truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Deyes High School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

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### Leave of Absence

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) regulations remove the ability for Headteachers to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents taking students out of school for holiday may be issued with a Penalty Notice (£60 per parent per child) if this is without the permission of the school due to exceptional circumstances. This will rise to £120 if not paid within 21 days but before 28.

Application for Leave of Absence should be made in writing using the designated Leave of Absence Form if possible 10 working days prior to leave being required.

### Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities

Ensure their son or daughter attend the school regularly;

Support their son or daughters attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum; Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Notify school on the first day of absence using the schools absence telephone line (0151 526 3814 option 1) or reporting to the school office.

Ensure their son or daughter arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day.

### The use of Parenting Contracts

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 amends section 18 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. Schools' (and Local Authorities') power to enter into voluntary parenting contracts in cases of truancy.

This is a written voluntary agreement between the school, Governing Body and the parent. The parent agrees to comply with certain requirements and the school agrees to provide, or help the parent access, the support they need.

Parenting contracts are appropriate where the parent is willing to engage with the school but needs support in order to improve their child's behaviour, attendance or punctuality.

### Legal Framework

Under section 36 of the 1944 Education Act, parents or carers of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their child receives full time education, whether by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Parents or carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the penalty means that parents or carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

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It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure that all pupils between the ages of 5 and 16 receive an education.

This Policy and Procedures document is informed by DfES circular 11/91 “The Education (School Attendance Records) Regulations 1991” and “School Attendance -Policies and Practise – Categorisation of Absence” DfES 1994 – Paragraph 21, reminds us that:

“Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call, Student planner) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it”.

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