

# Danemill Primary School



# **Danemill** Primary School

Learning and discovering together

## **Attendance POLICY**

REVISED October 2014

RATIFIED AT FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

# Attendance Policy

## Introduction AIMS:

Danemill Primary School is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

Parents might reconsider taking holidays during term time if they were aware that missing lessons may never be repeated and that:

1 day absence = 5 lessons missed  
3 days missed = 15 lessons missed  
1 week absence = 25 lessons missed  
2 weeks absence = 50 lessons missed

## Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

## To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Implement a clear and coherent whole school policy on attendance
- Identifying a lead manager for the school attendance
- Ensuring that all staff subscribe to a consistent, whole school approach to improving and maintaining pupil attendance
- Detailing parental responsibilities for attendance in the school prospectus and at admission meetings giving a clear message on the law, times of school day and procedures in cases of absence.
- Providing curriculum support for individual pupils with an identified need in order to prevent disaffection which may lead to non attendance
- Introducing reward and incentive initiatives

- Informing parents of attendance initiatives by letter, newsletters and at Parents' Evening
- Making contact with parents/carers on 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence (by 10.00am if possible in case it is a missing child)
- Monitoring all pupils with less than 95% attendance
- Sending parents termly attendance reports.
- Sending letters to parents/carers regarding concerns
- Monitoring attendance patterns and punctuality and using data for comparative purposes
- Rewarding 100% and improved attendance
- Conducting regular attendance reviews
- Keeping school governors informed of all attendance matters
- Discuss with parent consultation group on how parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.

Sickness

Unavoidable medical or dental appointments

(If absences are considered excessive, proof may be required by way of a doctor's note)

Days of religious observance

Public performances, where participation has been agreed by the school and a licence has been granted by the Local Authority

Exceptional family circumstances, (e.g. bereavement)

Approved sporting activity

Family holiday in term time (agreed in advance by school for exceptional circumstances only at the Head Teacher's discretion)

Exclusion (fixed period)

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

Frequent absences attributed to minor ailments but not supported by medical evidence

Looking after the house

Looking after siblings or sick parents (except in genuine crisis for a limited period)

Shopping during school hours

Birthdays

Day Trips

Holidays (not agreed by the school)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your 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 usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all pupil absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our school system. All our PA pupils and their parents/carers are subject to an Action. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Pupil Services Court Team.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence (and on subsequent days) if we have not heard from you;
- Write to you to if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer or Head Teacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Services Court Team if attendance is a major concern.

NB. Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

### **Telephone Numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and

can also encourage absence. If a child arrives 10 minutes late each day that adds up to 50 minutes weekly = equivalent to one lesson weekly.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your CHILD will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.10am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your CHILD arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer / Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Holidays In Term Time:**

#### **Holidays During Term Time**

The Government has removed the discretion for Headteachers to grant absence for pupils to take a holiday during term time.

The only exception to this is for a reason considered to be 'exceptional' by the Headteacher. Having taken advice on this matter, Danemill School will consider the following as exceptional circumstances:-

- a holiday for a terminally ill child or sibling
- a family holiday with a terminally ill parent/carer
- a family holiday following the recent death of a parent/carer

Other exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis but will **not** include-

- financial reasons for taking a holiday in term time
- visits to family and friends living abroad
- holidays in term time due to the work commitments of parents/carers in school holiday periods
- holiday taken as part of a family wedding

The process for requesting leave during term time for a family holiday is to write directly to the Headteacher at least four weeks prior to the holiday, stating the exceptional circumstance. The Headteacher will consider the circumstances and write back to parents/carers with the outcome of his decision.

If the reason is not felt to be an exceptional circumstance or holiday has been taken without notification then the written response to parents/carers will indicate that the absence will be unauthorised, if the holiday is taken. Parents/carers are also at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice as per Leicestershire County Council Code of Conduct.

(Although we are an Academy, Leicestershire County Council retain responsibility for pupil attendance at school). As a result of the change to Government legislation, the updated Code of Conduct states that the County Council are very likely to issue a Penalty Notice for 5 days or more of unauthorised absence due to a family holiday. In this case a Penalty Notice of £60.00 is issued to each parent/carer for each child and must be paid within 21 days or will increase to £120.00. A further period of 7 days is then allowed for payment prior to prosecution.

### **School target, projects and special initiatives.**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The Attendance target for the school for 2014-15 is **96%**

We know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

## The Registration System

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

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

## **Security of registers**

Official Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. These are safely kept in a secure locked cabinet on the school premises.

## **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Mrs A. Neal, Attendance Officer

Mrs C Winterton, Head Teacher

Marion Bullivant- Secondary Schools attendance officer

## **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. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**Date of Policy**

**October 2014**

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**Procedure in case of Persistent Absence or Lateness**

1. Phone call from School Attendance Officer / Head Teacher
2. Letter to parents informing them of school's concern
3. Letter to ask parent to meet with Head Teacher to discuss concerns and possible solutions. (Minutes will be taken at this meeting)
4. Meeting with Head Teacher – Formal Caution
5. Referral to Pupil Services Court Team





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Parent/Carer details  
Address

Date

Dear

Re: (Pupil name and form)

Danemill School is continually striving to raise attendance levels in order to maximise the educational achievements of all pupils. There is a great deal of current research available which clearly shows that even quite low levels of absence have a negative impact on achievement and attainment. Our attendance target for all pupils this academic year is 96% and where attendance drops below this level, parents are contacted.

To keep you informed, as part of our regular checks on attendance it has been noticed that the attendance for ..... currently stands at .....% which is below the expected level.

If there are any issues that are making it difficult for your child to attend school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the Pastoral Manager to discuss your concerns or whether there is anything we can do together to resolve any issues.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Winterton  
Headteacher

Mill Lane Enderby Leicester LE19 4LH  
**0116 286 2674 / [office@danemill.leics.sch.uk](mailto:office@danemill.leics.sch.uk)**  
**[www.danemill.com](http://www.danemill.com)**

Head Teacher – Mrs C Winterton  
Deputy Head Teacher – Mr P Taylor



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Parent/carer details  
Address

Date

Dear

Re: (Pupil name and form)

Further to my earlier letter this academic year, I am writing to express my continued concern about .....’s attendance which currently stands at .....%. This is below the expected level and will have a negative impact upon learning and achievement.

.....’s attendance will continue to be monitored by myself and the Attendance Manager working with the school and if there is no improvement, you will be contacted again.

I look forward to seeing a marked improvement in your child’s attendance. If you are experiencing difficulties in securing your child’s attendance or have any other concerns please do not hesitate to contact either myself or one of the Pastoral Managers.

I trust that I can rely on your continuing support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Winterton  
Headteacher

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Head Teacher – Mrs C Winterton  
Deputy Head Teacher – Mr P Taylor



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Date

Parent Details

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Postcode

Dear

Re: Student details

I have been advised by Danemill Primary School that your child regularly arrives late for the start of the day. This is disruptive to both your child's education and that of the other children in their class.

I must also bring to your attention the legal responsibility you have in ensuring your child receives the efficient full-time education to which they are entitled. Not only does this mean that you must ensure your child attends Danemill Primary School regularly, but that they arrive on time at the start of the school day. School is open at 8.45am so the children have plenty of time to be ready for the register.

I trust I can rely on your full co-operation in resolving this issue. As the Attendance Manager for The Lutterworth and Brockington Partnership, I regularly monitor attendance/lateness and will contact you again only if the problem persists. If there is anything further you wish to discuss then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Marion Bullivant**

**Attendance Manager**

**The Lutterworth and Brockington Partnership of Schools**

Contact telephone numbers:

*Brockington College: 0116 2863722 (Mon/Tues) Lutterworth College: 01455 554101 (Wed/Thurs)*

*Lutterworth High School: 01455 552710 (Fri) Mobile no.: 07542119814*

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