



**DAVISON CE HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

**POLICY AND MANAGEMENT DOCUMENT**

# **Attendance Policy**

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## Policy Statement

For students to gain the greatest benefit from their education at Davison CE High School for Girls it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

## Context

West Sussex has a statutory duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children receive a suitable education and for most that requires that they are registered at a school. West Sussex also has a responsibility under the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The duty to enforce attendance is exercised through the Pupil Entitlement Team.

It is part of the statutory duty of the school's governing body to monitor student attendance and to seek ways in which attendance can be improved, particularly for persistent non-attenders,

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will **seriously** affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may ultimately result in prosecution.

## Promoting regular attendance

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

### Staff responsible for, and available to support attendance:

- Form Tutor
- Lead Tutor
- Pastoral Managers
- Attendance Manager
- Head of Key Stage
- Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral
- Head Teacher
- Link Governor

### Expectations for students

- Aim for 100% attendance, being absent only through genuine illness
- Arrive at school by 8.40am and be punctual to every lesson

- Register at Student Services if they are late
- Ensure a parent/ carer contacts school to provide a reason for any unavoidable absence
- See individual teachers and catch up work missed during any period of absence.

**We ask parents/carers to:**

- To ensure that student arrives at school regularly and on time
- To support attendance by keeping absence requests to a minimum
- To not condone unjustified absence from school
- To notify school on first day of absence (and each day thereafter) by 9.15am – failure to do so could result in the absence being unauthorised
- To contact the school without delay if they have concerns about any aspect of their daughter's life which might affect attendance

Irregular attendance means students will miss out on aspects of the educational experience on offer at Davison CE High School.

## **Absence procedures**

**If a student is absent it is the parent/ carer's responsibility to:**

- Contact us via Studybugs (available as an app or via their website) as soon as possible on the first day of illness, and on each subsequent morning if your child is still unwell.

**If a student is absent and no reason has been provided the school will:**

- Send parent/ carer a text via our automated system, requesting the parent/ carer to contact the school
- Phone contact may be made to ascertain the reason for the child's absence
- Conduct a home visit, and/ or contact the police and Children's Services if we cannot make contact, in order to ensure the child is safe.

**Following an absence the school will:**

If an illness extends beyond 2 days the parent/ carer may be contacted and asked to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription or medical appointment card. At identified points in the school year attendance levels letters will be sent and parents/ carers will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss attendance if the school is concerned about levels of attendance.

## **Understanding types of absence**

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

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked with 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.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, emergencies or other reasons the school deems to be unavoidable. Students will not be allowed to leave school for medical appointments without a note or an appointment card.

Regular days off ill may be challenged. Lack of any medical evidence for these days off may lead to school unauthorised absence leading to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. These may include:

- Truancy
- Absences for which no reason is provided
- Late arrivals
- Looking after siblings/ family members
- Day trips and holidays without prior permission
- Parents/ carers keeping students off unnecessarily eg for a family birthday.

Whilst students may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/ carers and the student. If the student is reluctant to attend, it is never advisable 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 makes things worse.

#### Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

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

We monitor all 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 a parent/ carer will be informed of this. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully; they are likely to be involved in interventions and will be referred to the Pupil Entitlement Team if no improvement is seen, this may result in penalty notices or legal action.

## **Punctuality**

Lateness is a form of absence. School starts at 8.40am. Late arrivals are expected to sign in through Student Services. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss essential work. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the student and also encourages absence. Students who are late to school may face appropriate penalties. Parents/ carers of students who are persistently late will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss and resolve the issues leading to poor punctuality.

If students arrive significantly late, after registration closes, this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution if the problem persists.

## **Absence during term time**

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of education during term time.

Unauthorised absences can result in legal intervention being taken against a parent for the irregular attendance or punctuality of their child, Legal intervention that may be considered includes: issue of a fixed-penalty notice or consideration may be given to a prosecution in a Magistrates' Court under the Education Act 1996.

Regular unauthorised absence without medical evidence will be queried and may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued by West Sussex County Council and/ or a referral to the Pupil Entitlement Team.

Penalty notices are issued by West Sussex County Council. A penalty notice is a fine of £60 (per parent, per child taken out of school) which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action. A conviction of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 may result in a fine of £1,000. If the matter is considered to be more serious, then proceedings can be taken under Section 444(1A) and fines can be up to £2,500 or a prison sentence imposed.

## **Holidays in term time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/ carers to help us by not taking your daughter away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your daughter's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and at Davison CE High School holidays in term time will not be authorised. If there are very exceptional circumstances the school authorise leave of absence – in these circumstances parents/ carers should apply to the Headteacher using a Request For Absence In School Time form which can be collected from reception.

All applications for holidays in these exceptional circumstances must be made in advance and a maximum of 5 days only in the academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of absence in term time.

**If a holiday is taken which is unauthorised by the school, then a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued if the absence is 10 sessions or more.**

The Headteacher will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision, using the request for absence form or, in more complex situations, by letter.

## Truancy

Regular truancy checks are undertaken; this may be in partnership with the local authority or the Police Liaison Officer. These will be targeted at known truants and based on a random selection of students absent on a given day. In school, lesson truancy checks are also run, and parents/ carers will be informed if it is found that their child is missing from a lesson.

## Improving attendance

Early intervention is nearly always successful in improving attendance. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the student to the local authority. If ways of trying to improve the student's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the school can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. Parents/ carers or students may wish to contact the Attendance Officer, or tutor, to ask for help or information and appropriate advice.

## Summary

- ***The target for all students is at least 96% attendance***
- ***The school has a legal duty to promote attendance***
- ***Parents/ carers have a duty to make sure their daughter attend and arrive on time***
- ***A student with attendance below 90% is considered to be 'persistently absent'***
- ***Term-time holidays are not permitted***
- ***Individual and group attendance figures are regularly shared***
- ***School staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible***
- ***Where poor attendance is protracted a referral will be made to the Pupil Entitlement Team and prosecution may follow.***

## Document Information

### **Date of next policy review**

The policy will be reviewed every three years unless there is a change in operational or legislative procedures.

Policy Created: Spring Term 2022

Policy Reviewed: March 2022

Next Policy Review: Spring Term 2025

See also :

Request for Absence in School Time

A Davison Parent/Carer Guide to Attendance

Fixed Penalty Notice leaflet

Attendance Percentage Guidance