



Mary Dean's CE Primary School and Nursery Attendance Policy

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Statement of Intent

We want your child to thrive in our school every day. We build strong and enduring relationships because we believe this is the foundation pupils need to fully engage in our community, to feel a sense of belonging and succeed.

Every child has a right to access education, and **everyone** is responsible for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. Mary Dean's CE Primary School and Nursery are committed to providing the highest quality of education to our pupils and we recognise the clear link between attendance and the attainment of our pupils.

The aim of this Attendance Policy is to enable Mary Dean's CE Primary School and Nursery to provide a consistent practice that actively encourages and supports the highest possible levels of attendance for all our pupils. Mary Dean's CE Primary School and Nursery takes a whole-school approach to maintaining regular attendance and to achieve this, all members of our school community have an important contribution to make. It is vital that we work in partnership to ensure that any in-school or out-of-school barriers are removed at the earliest opportunity, this is achieved through early and meaningful support.

We support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and in addition, promote and support punctuality when attending lessons.

We are committed to taking positive action in line with the Equality Act (2010) regarding the needs of people with protected characteristics. These are age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership. We make reasonable adjustments to avoid anyone with a protected characteristic being placed at a disadvantage. Our relentless approach to ensuring our pupils attend school and receive the education that they deserve, and are entitled to, is central to our school values.

This policy is supported by policies relating to child protection and safeguarding, anti-bullying, pupil behaviour, equality, and special educational needs.

It is our duty to strive for a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils so that they can take full advantage of the opportunities offered. It is vital that your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Therefore, this policy has been created to help support the school in effectively managing absences so that our pupils (your children) can make the most of the educational and life opportunities available to them.

In summary, Mary Dean's CE Primary School and Nursery aims to meet its obligations relating to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence by effectively removing the barriers to attendance
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Minimising the disruption caused by late arrivals or non-attendance to the quality of the education and provisions for all pupils



1 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all school leaders, staff, parents, and pupils.

- 1.1 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'teachers' include all paid staff responsible for the supervision of pupils.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'pupils' include all learners in our school.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'school' refers to all education settings, regardless of type.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this policy and the procedures, we refer to Section 576 of the Education Act which defines the 'parent' of a pupil or young person as:
 - Both of their natural parents, whether they are married or not.
 - Any person who, although they are not the natural parent, has parental responsibility for the pupil or young person, as defined in the Children Act (1989).
 - Any person who, although not the natural parent, has the care of the pupil or young person, i.e. a person with whom the pupil lives, irrespective of their relationship to the pupil.

2 Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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:

- The Education Act (1996)
- The Education Act (2002)
- The Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2010)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2011)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.



Responsibilities

- 3.1 All children aged 5 - 16 years must receive suitable education. (Section 7, *Education Act (1996)*). A pupil of compulsory school age who is registered at a school must, by law, attend regularly.
- 3.2 By law, parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly. (Section 576, *Education Act (1996)*).
- 3.3 The Local Authority (LA) must offer educational provision for all children of school age.
- 3.4 By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed or has been notified that the pupil will attend the school.
- 3.5 Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- 3.6 By law, all schools must keep an admissions' register, the contents of which includes all pupils, their personal details, (including at least two telephone numbers for different safe adults, to ensure that we can always contact someone in the event of an emergency), the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and details of the school last attended.
- 3.7 Pupils will be removed from roll only when they complete their education stage, transfer to another school, move out of the area or emigrate or following a parental request for elective home education. We follow statutory guidance for removing pupils from roll and notifying the local authority. Further information can be found in Appendix 2 – Practical information for staff.
- 3.8 There is a clear link between attainment and attendance. Under **section 444 (1)** of the **Education Act 1996** (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. We therefore enforce the use of statutory action to encourage and promote attendance, this is done to ensure that all pupils can benefit from their legal right to receive an education.
- 3.9 School will communicate attendance concerns to the pupil's social worker, if they have one or The Virtual School Head, if the pupil is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual School Head, where relevant.
- 3.10 We have a roles and responsibilities framework outlined in Appendix 1 (practical information for parents) and Appendix 2 (practical information for staff) to complement this policy. These define agreed roles and responsibilities for parents, pupils and staff. This includes the new responsibility for our School Attendance Champion who is Miss Victoria Lewis, Administrator.



4 Definitions

- 4.1 A pupil is classed as absent if they arrive after the register has closed or if they do not attend for any reason.
- 4.2 An authorised absence is when approval has been given in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be absent for a specific (legal) purpose, or we have accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence from a parent or carer. This may include:
- An absence for illness for which we have granted leave
 - Medical or dental appointments may be granted leave where every attempt has been made to arrange outside of school hours, has been unsuccessful and so cannot be avoided, or where the appointment is a genuine emergency
 - Religious or cultural observances for which we have granted leave. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents or pupil belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance
 - An absence which is now deemed to be due to exceptional circumstances
- 4.3 An unauthorised absence is defined as one where we are not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Reasons may include:
- Parents keeping children from attending unnecessarily or without reason
 - Missing sessions before or during the school day
 - Absences which have never been properly explained
 - Arrival after the register has closed
 - Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed
 - Leaving our school without authorisation during the day
- 4.4 Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.
- 4.5 Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.
- 4.6 Persistent lateness is defined as pupils who have five or more late marks recorded in a single half-term.

5 Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

- 5.1 We recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year. We recognise that certain groups of pupils may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.
- 5.2 We set challenging attendance targets for the whole school.
- 5.3 Pupil-level absence data is collected regularly and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. We compare our attendance data to the national average.



5.4 Specific measures are taken to monitor attendance. These processes are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the effective safeguarding of all pupils through specific tailored interventions. Data on attendance is collected and analysed a minimum of once a half term. Key analysis is made of:

- Patterns of absence
- Patterns of lateness
- Patterns of medical appointments
- Correct and consistent use of absence codes
- Trends in reasons for absence, for example, use of the C code, leave of absence and exclusions
- Trends in particular groups of children for example, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

5.5 Attendance data informs action planning and supports the identification of key priorities in our school development plan and future revisions of this policy. The attendance data will be reported to the Head of School and all other relevant staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. Data will also be used by the school to monitor the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

6 Reviewing this Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As a result of any other significant change or event
- If the policy is determined not to be effective

