



DAUBENEV MIDDLE SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Philosophy

Daubeney Middle School is committed to maximising attendance for all pupils to enable them to benefit fully from their education. We believe that regular attendance is vital for effective learning.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parent/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise the importance of establishing strong home/school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

We will identify and address, as speedily as possible, any problems affecting attendance and adopt, at all times, a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance.

Principles

The school will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. It will promote positive staff attitudes to those pupils returning from absences.

Staff will be made aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session's and attendance is regularly monitored.

Parent/carers will be encouraged to contact school early on the first day of absence.

Attendance procedures will be regularly evaluated by senior managers and school governors.

Procedures will allow returned absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other pupils in the class.

Consultation will take place with staff and the Education Welfare Officer to develop and maintain the school Attendance Policy.

Procedure

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Daubeney Middle School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community; pupils, parent/carers and school staff.

Pupils are expected to attend school and lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support.

Parent/carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parent/carers are required to notify the school of the reason on the first day of absence and each day their child is away from school. Parent/carers whose first language is not English or have literacy problems, will be offered support from school in matters of communication.

A pupil's absence from school will remain unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is given by the parent/carer. Parent/carers will be promptly informed of any concerns over their child's attendance. Parent/carers should avoid, wherever possible, making medical or dental appointments during school hours and taking family holidays during the school term.

School staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Staff should convey high expectations to pupils regarding attendance and punctuality. Staff will promptly investigate all absenteeism, liaising closely with parent/carers. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.

Registration

Registers will be called promptly at 8:50am and 1:25pm.

Registers will officially close at 9:30am (at the beginning of the first lesson of the morning) and 1:30pm (at the beginning of the first lesson in the afternoon).

Where pupils arrive late and the register is still open, they will be marked late but counted as a present for the session. Where pupils miss registration and do not provide an adequate explanation, they will be marked as late but counted as unauthorised absent. Where pupils miss registration but provide an acceptable explanation – eg. medical or dental appointments, they will be marked as absent but as authorised absent for that session.

Lateness – lateness is actively discouraged and challenged immediately if and when it arises. Pupils who arrive late after the registers have closed should report to the School Office and have their names entered into the **School Out/Late Book**. If a child does not have a satisfactory reason for being late, they will be required to attend a breaktime detention in the Entrance Hall, to make up for the time they missed by arriving late.

The Attendance Officer, whose responsibility it is to check the registers each morning and contact parent/carers where necessary, will also inform each Head of Year if an individual pupil is persistently late. This may result in a breaktime detention, or if this continues, an after school detention.

Absences will be totalled and analysed to inform policies.

Documentation re- Registration, please see **Appendix A**.

Recording Absence

All staff must record absences, either as authorised or unauthorised, using the agreed symbols.

Consistent criteria should be applied to decision making. If staff have reasons to doubt the explanation offered about whether a particular absence is genuine, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and the Head of Year should be informed. Absences should not be authorised once a warning letter for court action has been issued to parent/carers by the Education Welfare Service, unless a medical certificate is received. If in doubt the Attendance Officer will seek advice from the Education Welfare Officer.

Annual Holidays Taken During Term Time

The 2008 Pupil Registration Regulations state that “time off school for a family holiday is not a right. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher to grant the holiday if they believe that the circumstances warrant it” (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations May 2008 paragraph 60).

In keeping with the Kempston Schools’ Joint Policy regarding holiday requests, adopted in July 2010, Daubeney Middle school will code all holiday applications in term time as “unauthorised”, unless there are special circumstances*.

Any application for a holiday in term time should be made, in writing, via the application form, prior to booking a holiday and at least 6 weeks before the date of departure. Parents/Carers may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss this request with the Joint Headteachers or another senior member of staff.

Parent/carers may be subject to a penalty warning letter if a pupils’ attendance falls below the schools’ 95% target.

These special circumstances (‘Keeping Pupil Registers) May 08’ paragraph 61) include:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time where the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil’s education;
- When the family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- At the discretion of the Headteacher based upon individual circumstances.

Requests for the following reasons are not accepted reasons for taking pupils out

during term time, and will result in not only the holiday being “unauthorised” but parent/carers possibly being issued with a penalty warning letter or fixed penalty notice:

- Availability of cheap holidays;
- Availability of desired accommodation;
- Poor weather experienced in the school holiday period;
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term;

No requests will be granted during internal or external examination periods.

Any application from a pupil with attendance below 85% may result in involvement of the Education Welfare Service and may be subject to a £50 Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is £50 if paid within 28 days or £100 if paid after the 28 days but before 42 days (per parent/carer, per child). If the parent/carer/carer does not pay the Penalty Notice it may lead to prosecution.

Unauthorised Absence

Parent/carers of all pupils with unauthorised absence/s will be asked to a meeting with the Head of Year where the parent/carers’ statutory responsibility and reasons for the unauthorised absence will be discussed. The EWO is actively involved in any case of persistent/frequent unauthorised absences.

Follow-up of Absence

If no information is received from the parent/carer of the absent pupil on the morning of the first absence, the school will contact the parent/carer by telephone. If this action does not result in an explanation or the return of the pupil to school, then a letter will be sent after four days. The matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer if the absence continues after ten school days without explanation from the parent/carer, as the pupil will become known as missing and correct procedures will be followed.

Action on irregular attendance will initially involve the Attendance Officer contacting the parent/carer to discuss the matter. If the attendance does not improve the Head of Year will invite the parent/carers to a meeting. The aim of the meeting will be to identify and resolve any difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parent/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If the pupil’s difficulties are not resolved and the attendance does not improve, a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer and formal intervention planned. A penalty notice can be made when attendance is a continuous problem.

In the event of a pupil returning after a long absence, then an individual re-integration strategy will be implemented.

If a pupil is absent from school for a long term illness (broken leg or virus etc), then they will be referred to Greys Education for home tuition.

Review/Strategies

Part of the evaluation process will be to consider what interventions, as listed below, have been successful.

- Attendance Officer telephoning parent/carers on the first day of absence;
- Statistics produced from SIMs Attendance Software each month;
- Education Welfare Officer checks and analyses attendance statistics at least once every half term;
- Attendance discussed as an agenda item at least once every half term at the Heads of Year meetings;
- Heads of Year inform their Year Team of individual pupil concerns;
- Targets are set annually with the LA;

Conclusion

Maintaining and improving attendance at Daubeney Middle School requires all staff to be vigilant at all times.

Appendix A

INSTRUCTIONS FOR KEEPING OF THE REGISTER (OMR)

- The register is a legal document and as such must be marked at morning and afternoon registration. Failure to do so could lead to problems should a fire drill be called or the EWO visits to check the registers. We could also be prosecuted for non-completion.
- **All attendances, both PRESENT and ABSENT should be marked using the BLACK ITALIC PEN (as supplied by the Attendance Officer), with a horizontal mark across either the 'P' or 'A' on the OMR Pupil Registration Form. The 'P' or 'A' must be obliterated!!**
- When pupils are not in the classroom for afternoon registration, (having been in school in the morning), would you please use the 'Absence at Registration Enquiry' form and send it to the office for staff to check the whereabouts of the pupils. It may simply be a matter of the pupil having gone into lunch for the last sitting or they may have been sent home sick during the morning. As it stands at the moment, the pupil is being marked absent when there is no record of them being sent home or both the 'P' and the 'A' are being crossed out, which confuses the absence figures.
- If you mark both the 'P' and the 'A' in error, would you please ensure that you tippex out the wrong one. If left with both marked, it causes problems when printing out absence information and for the pupil's record as it will have that child being late when in fact they are either present or absent.
- If a new pupil is assigned to your Tutor Group during the first week of the Autumn Term or part-way through the year, simply write their name ON THE NEXT FREE LINE after the last named child and mark them in the usual way. The pupils will be included alphabetically on the following week's Registration Form.
- Registration officially closes at 9:10am (ie., at the beginning of Lesson 1). If a child is not physically present when you are ready to send the register up to the School Office than that child must be marked absent. (Any child attending an early morning Club/Activity should write their name on the board of their Form Room indicating that they are in school, and these pupils will therefore be marked Present). If any child comes into school after the register has been sent up to the School Office and before the 9:10am cut of time, then the School Office staff will change the mark to Present. If the child comes into school after 9:10am then the School Office staff will code the Weekly Absence Sheet with a late mark or a 'M' if the child has been to the doctor or dentist etc. Any child who is late will have their name entered into the Visits In/Out Book kept in the School Office, noting the reason for lateness and then any persistent lateness for no particular reasons can be monitored.
- All absences and reasons for absence **must be recorded daily** on the white Weekly Absence Record Form which is issued with the Registration Form each week. When this sheet is coded daily it is much easier to complete the OMR Absence Sheet as it is issued, particularly if you, the Form Tutor, should be absent and someone else has to complete the OMR Sheet. Please see attached sheet for the codes to be used for absence. If there are any queries as to which code to use, please check with Mrs Bennett in the School Office.
- Each Friday afternoon the Pupil Registration Form will be cleared through the OMR. If there are any absence queries then these will be printed on an OMR Absence Form and this will be placed in your register folder with the next week's newly printed OMR Registration Form. Using the codes provided mark with a horizontal mark across the applicable code. If there is no reason for absence because the information as not been received from the parent/carers, please leave absence uncoded. (PLEASE SEE ABSENCE RECORDS SHEET ATTACHED WHICH GIVES FULL DETAILS OF RECORDING ABSENCE).

Appendix A - cont

- All letters and messages received by telephone regarding absence should be kept in the pink folder in the front of your register until the end of the week, by which time the reason for absence should have been recorded on the white Weekly Absence Record Form. **Please date the note/s you have from parent/carers, as often there is no indication in the notes as to which date/s the absence note/s refer.** Thereafter, these letters and messages will be filed away in a special blue folder which is kept at the front of each Form's batch of Yellow Record Cards in the School Office filing cabinets. **Form Tutors should check these at the end of each term, discarding those which raise no queries but keeping any which give cause for concern or which might be useful to the EWO in the future. Any notes needing to be kept for a new academic year should be passed to the Office staff, who will file them into new folders.**
- If no notification is received giving a reason for a child's absence, then a letter should be sent to the parent/carers (see supply attached). If no replies are received in response to this letter then letters will automatically be printed via the software package on the office computer.
- The front pocket in your Register Folder is to hold official registers, which will be printed monthly. Coding of absences should be completed by the end of the first week in any month. The official register will then be printed. These monthly registers must be kept in your register at all times as it is a legal document and will, month by month, build up to form the whole academic year's register. **THESE PAGES MUST NEVER BE LOST!!!**
- At any time you require an in depth attendance record for a specific child, please request one – the system will produce one! The system will also produce an annual attendance record for each child in your Form and this information can be used for each child's annual report in the Summer Term.
- If a pupil has a doctor/dentist appointment in the afternoon and they are therefore going home for lunch and then on to the appointment from home, would you please remind pupils that they must sign out at the office **before they leave school at lunchtime.**
- **NB. Heads of Year:** All correspondence relating to absences, ie., telephone calls, letters, interviews, must be recorded on an index card (available from the School Office) and kept in the pupil's Yellow Record File. Only by doing this will we be able to refer specific cases to the EWO for their help with persistent absenteeism.

PLEASE REMEMBER

TO USE THE CORRECT PEN

- To make horizontal marks across the 'P' or 'A' with the correct pen and use firm pressure so that the letter 'P' or 'A' is obliterated.
- Do not bend or fold the OMR sheets – they will not go through the OMR Marker.
- If you make a mistake, please erase the mark with Tippex or see Zöe. Do not cross it out, as the OMR will still read it.
- **Do not use red pen or pencil** – the OMR will read any such marks.
- If for any inconceivable reason a register is not marked and as such it is discovered at afternoon registration or the next morning – would you please ensure that it is completed at time of discovery – do not leave it unmarked.

Appendix A - cont

ABSENCE RECORDS

A. Absence Record Sheet (plain white sheet, titled 'Absence Records w/b/ and then the date of the week which it covers)

Each Monday you will receive, with your Register OMR Sheet, a white Absence Record Sheet. On this sheet you will record and code that week's absences from the information received from the parent/carers by letter or from the yellow Absence Report slips from the Office Staff. By Friday afternoon registration you should have coded **ALL KNOWN** absences.

On Friday afternoon all letters and yellow Absence Report slips will be removed from your register and filed away in you Blue files at the front of your Form's yellow record cards in the office filing cabinets – so please make sure you have coded your absences by 1:30pm!!!

On this Absence Record Sheet you should mark when a child is absent with an 'A', then when you have the relevant information you can code it. You will then be able to see at a glance those absences not coded and which you must, therefore, follow-up with a letter – either one of those which you already have with this package or one which will automatically be produced by the software package.

The coded absences on your weekly Absence Record Sheet will then be ready for you to transfer to the OMR Record Sheet which you will receive each Monday morning. (See Section B below)

B. Absence Record Sheet (OMR)

The pupils listed on this sheet are those who have been absent but have not yet had that absence coded on the computer. Please code these absences on Monday mornings, using the previous week's white Weekly Absence Record sheet.

Any absences not coded because parent/carers have not responded to our letters should be referred to the Year Co-ordinator for further action.

(NB., All previous absence note and telephone messages are in the blue folder, which is kept in the front of your Form's yellow record cards in the office filing cabinets).

ABSENCE CODES

* = Not on roll	B = Educated off site (eg., Home Tuition)
C = Other authorised circumstances	E = Excluded
I = Illness	M = Medical (visit to doctor/dentist)
L = Late (ie., after register has been marked and before 9:30am)	N = No reason given
O = Truancy, unauthorised	P = Sporting activity (approved)
R = Religious Observance	V = Educational Visit Out (ie., trips out, day trips or residential)
T = Traveller Absence	Y = Enforced closure
U = Late (ie., after the register is closed at 9:30am and with no acceptable reason for lateness eg., 'got up late')	

The current Attendance Co-ordinator is:

Mrs Z Bennett

The Governor(s) responsible for attendance is

This policy was presented to the Governing Body

10th February 2011

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body:

Date for Review:

February 2012