



Davenant Foundation School

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Last Reviewed: June 2024

Next Review: June 2025

This policy has been reviewed and to the best of our knowledge we do not feel that it impacts on any group or individuals' equality rights within our school community

POLICY DETAILS

Policy Name	SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	Committee Responsible	Curriculum and standards
Status	DISCRETIONARY	Committee Person i/c	AT
Produced by	EH	First Agreed	
Date Produced		Last Review Date	June 2024
References		Next Review Date	June 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Davenant Foundation School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students 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 children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Davenant Foundation 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 students 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.

2.2 A member of the Senior Leadership Team 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. This person, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data is shared with the Senior Leadership Team, is made regularly available to all staff, students and parents/carers (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body on a regular basis. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

- i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers/form tutors are responsible for the completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes.
- ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.40am** and **1.20pm (12.25pm for Sixth Form)** by each form tutor and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child. There is an expectation that students attend both AM and PM registrations.
- iii) The registers will close at **9.00am** and **1.30pm**. Any student who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent for that session**. Students who arrive before the register closes will be counted **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para. 4.5 on page 6).

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent 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 appropriate member of the leadership team.

ii) Davenant Foundation 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 child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents/carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Davenant Foundation School will therefore challenge parents/carers about the need and reasons for their children'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.**

iii) Authorised Absences

Absences will be authorized in the following circumstances:

- (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - › a student is to participate in an approved performance,
 - › a student is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - › in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for an event for which the parents/carers have sought permission in advance (see the school's policy on leave of absence requests);
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (c) where the student has a medical appointment and evidence has been provided (although parents/carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent belongs;
- (f) the student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent/carer is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade;
- (g) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**

iv) U n a u t h o r i s e d A b s e n c e s

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent/carer;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the student is staying at home to mind the house;
- the student is shopping during school hours;
- the student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday;
- the student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Class registers

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness): Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up by the school office and measures taken to locate the student.

2.7 Staff training

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

3. **Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The school will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents/carers and the governing body. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group, tutor group, at subject level and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Davenant Foundation School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents/carers are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 First-day calling

The school operates a full day response to absence: we will text you if we have not heard from you in the first instance. If we are unable to make contact with parents/carers by telephone; we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding. A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parent/carers by the 10th day of absence, at which point your child will be considered Missing from Education.

4.3 School Strategies to Tackle Absence

A member of SLG is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that the school intervenes in non-attendance at an early stage.

Where there is an emerging pattern of a student's absence the school will invite parents/carers to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents/carers and student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents/carers that any future absences will be unauthorized unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.4 Local Authority Attendance Support Service

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority. . If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex A for the Essex Code of Conduct), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure overall attendance.

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically with schools, families and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence.

- 4.6 Students who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be marked late for the session and will receive a late detention on that day.
- 4.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late should therefore report to student reception. **It is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure.**
- 4.8 For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to student reception.
- 4.9 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. Davenant Foundation School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. Student absence is identified by electronic registration and will be reported to student reception. If, however, a student/ student appears to have left the premises without authorization, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents/carers immediately, and the Police and Social Care if deemed necessary.
- 4.11 Study leave
Davenant Foundation School believes that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, and students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. Study leave will **only** be granted to Year 11 and Sixth Form students during the time of the public examination period or mock examinations. Should any students wish to attend school (or should their parents/carers wish them to) on the days and at times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so.

The school will work within the legal requirements of: -

- study leave should only be granted to Year 11 and Sixth Form students and never to those in other year groups other than Year 10 prior to their RE examination
- is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, i.e. not before the beginning of that period;
- it should always be granted sparingly taking account of an individual student's ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study;
- any student has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent/carer has the right to insist he/she does so;
- any session given to students as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence (it is not an 'approved educational activity' as it is unsupervised) and should be recorded and reported on by the school as such.

5. School Attendance and The Law

There is no entitlement in law for students to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”.

By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

6. Leave of Absence Requests

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or his/her designate (not the local Authority) may authorize such a request and all applications for leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent/carer removes a child when the application for leave was refused, or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct. A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorized absence for the purpose of a holiday, however, due to the importance of students settling into school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorized absence during the first two weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

Davenant Foundation School will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

Davenant Foundation School will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents/carers who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;

- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

Davenant Foundation School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

Davenant Foundation School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests i.e.: GCSE examinations nor in Y11/Y13 in the term running up to external examinations.

6.1 Extended leave of absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Davenant Foundation School will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal holiday’;
- such visits may be important in terms of children’s identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents/carers may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child’s uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents/carers could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a ‘one off’ visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved.
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the student undertakes some school-set work during this period.

7. Deletion from Role

It is crucial that parents/carers keep the school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

Under Student Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the student being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that student, and in any event no later than the time at which the student’s name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a student’s name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the student has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

8. Parents/Carers responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Davenant Foundation School.

The School expects parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's 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.

Parents/carers will also be expected to:

- notify the school on the first day of absence using the absence line;
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents/carers meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. The school will endeavor to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

9. Students' 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 tutor 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 class teacher or form tutor a note from their parents/carers to explain the absence. Students also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

10. Governors' responsibilities

The governing body shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the school

11. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly
- Regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy
- schools have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others
- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

Related Documents:

Essex Code of Conduct

Behaviour management policy

Code of conduct

Pastoral care policy