



# Attendance Policy

| Review Cycle | Date of Current Policy | Author(s) of Current Policy | Review Date |
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| Annual       | 01/08/2023             | Simon Hunt                  | 01/08/2024  |

| Role     | Name       | Signature   | Date       |
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| Director | Simon Hunt |  | 01/08/2023 |

# Attendance Policy

## Statement of intent

This policy should be read within the wider context of the Behaviour Policy.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all those affected understand the importance of Education and their roles and responsibilities. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable pupils to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all pupils is monitored weekly, with the school seeking to work actively with parents and carers to ensure regular attendance.

## Scope

The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend the provision: subsequently they will be able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 year olds) receive a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Discovery Education aim to support and encourage parents/carers to meet these responsibilities.

## Overview

Discovery Education expect all pupils on roll to attend their agreed provision whether it be in school, within the home or our facility. We do all we can to encourage regular attendance and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. This is explained to pupils and parents at their Induction Meeting.

We know that poor attendance can seriously affect each pupils:

- Attainment at our provision
- Relationships with others and their ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

Persistent absence affects life chances and Discovery Education have a duty to protect education; we will challenge any unauthorised absence.

Attendance can be summarised as:

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|-----------|--|
| 96%       | <b>EXCELLENT</b> – Well done!! This will help all aspects of progress and life in school. This gives a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.  |
| 94-95%    | <b>AVERAGE</b> – Well done, strive to build on this.   |
| 85-93%    | <b>POOR</b> – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.   |
| Below 85% | <b>UNACCEPTABLE</b> – Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting learning. We will work with you and the Education, Performance and Inclusion team to improve your child’s attendance.<br><br>Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can “authorise” absence. The school will not accept all reasons as “Valid”. |

## Parental Responsibility

Parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure children attend regularly and on time.

## Authorised and unauthorised absences

Absence will be classified by Discovery Education, not parents/ carers. An absence is classed as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the correct medical evidence is received the school will make the absence authorised and mark with an I code (illness). Other occasions where the school will mark a C code (authorised absence) include, attending the wedding of a family member, family bereavement or to attend court (these examples are illustrative and not meant to be exhaustive). This system will be mirrored by Discovery Education.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school/provision does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. Examples include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily e.g. to go shopping, to care for a sibling, a pupil's/parent's/sibling's/relative's birthday
- Truancy/refusal
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Illness without medical evidence
- Holidays in term-term (in exceptional circumstances school/provision may agree term time holiday).

### Absence without reason

When a pupil is absent, the attendance administrator will record the absence in the register. As part of our safeguarding procedures, the school will endeavour to contact the parents/carers and other emergency contacts if information has not been received regarding the reason for the absence. This will happen every day of non-attendance where no call has been received informing us of absence and reasons why.

## **Illness and medical appointments**

When a pupil is unwell, parents/carers should contact the school/provision on the first day of absence. A call must be made for each subsequent day of absence. Parents/carers must provide a reason for absence.

When a pupil is absent due to illness or a medical appointment, evidence is required. This can be an appointment card, letter, prescription, prescribed medication packs or boxes with child's name printed on them.

When Discovery Education are concerned about the amount of school missed due to illness we may share information with external agencies (this is not a definitive list but could include the school, family solutions, social care). Parents/carers should ensure that every effort is made to make or arrange medical appointment outside hours of provision.

## **Holidays**

Pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt pupil's continuity of learning. Parents should avoid booking a family holiday in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance. Holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

## **Arrival Times**

All pupils **MUST** arrive for their provision on time, this is the time of arrival agreed with the Centre Lead or Headteacher at the pupil induction meeting. Transport may be arranged by the school/provision and an agreed time for pick up and drop off must also be adhered to. In circumstances such as bad weather or transport difficulties, Discovery Education may keep the register open for a longer period. If a start time has been agreed at induction that is later than when the school register closes pupils will be marked with a O (Unauthorised) until they arrive for their session – at which point the mark will be changed to / (present) if they have attended



on time, U (late -if they are within 5-30 minutes late for their agreed start time) or O, (unauthorised) if they fail to attend. Where late start times have been agreed there will be an on-going dialogue between the school and parent to work towards attending at the usual times. Persistent lateness may effect the students placement at the provision.

## **Provision Responsibilities**

Discovery Education holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the students school and the local authority. Attendance is recorded and data stored. It is a statutory duty for Discovery Education to maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by a Court.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and Discovery Education acknowledges that not one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents/carers keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

If a child is persistently late or absent for more than 10 sessions in a ten week period or Discovery Education identify a concern regarding a pupil's absence, we will report this to the Local Authority. We will start our process for non-attendance which includes issuing letters and/or arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss and achieve a resolution.

## **Education Performance**

Our team investigate issues around lack of attendance and follows up unexplained absence on the first morning. This is a positive proactive measure, which demonstrates vigilance, care and concern for our pupils and determination to build an effective partnership with parents/carers. Unauthorised absence is an indicator of disaffection and early intervention can prevent problems from becoming worse.

The Home/provision Agreement is important in promoting regular attendance. The Agreement makes it clear that regular attendance is required and that parents/carers are responsible for notifying the provision if their child cannot attend.

In cases of non co-operation with tuition arrangements, when a pupil is on roll, Discovery Education may cease the arrangements.

Pupils will be encouraged, where appropriate, to:

- Establish regular attendance.
- Inform teachers if there is a problem that may lead to absences.
- Sign and uphold the Home/School Agreement.

Parents/Carers will:

- Encourage attendance.
- Inform the teacher on the first day of non attendance.
- Liaise closely with the teacher(s) regarding concerns about attendance or punctuality.
- Discuss planned absences with the teacher(s) in advance.
- Sign and uphold the Home/School Agreement.

Staff will:

- Encourage attendance.
- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Ensure that pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- Liaise closely with parent/carer regarding concerns about attendance or punctuality.
- Contact parent/carer on the first day of absence.
- Report attendance concerns to Head or Deputy Head Teacher.