

Denefield School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date of next review	September 2024
Review cycle	Annual
Policy control sheet updated	Yes
Type of policy	Statutory
Policy owner	Headteacher
Location of policy	Website

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Aim

At Denefield School we believe that attendance and attainment are strongly linked. We want all of our students to attend school regularly and on time so they can become resilient and confident learners who are able to achieve their potential, attain satisfaction and fulfilment, and make a positive contribution to society.

Attendance is the responsibility of all stakeholders, including trustees, senior leaders, tutors, teachers, support staff, parents / carers and students.

Safeguarding

Attendance at school is an important protective factor for all children and young people, and in particular for the safeguarding of those who are more vulnerable. Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, action will be taken in line with Denefield's safeguarding policy.

Purpose

This policy sets out the expectations and procedures with regard to attendance and punctuality at Denefield.

Expectations

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their child receives an education and we are pleased when our school is selected to provide this. Parents, carers and students therefore agree to work together with the school in order to ensure the best outcomes for the academic and personal development of each young person. We expect all of our students to attend school regularly and on time. We set all students a minimum attendance target of 96%. Students whose attendance falls below 90% will be regarded as *persistent absentees*. An attendance of 50% or below is considered *severe absence*. The school will work closely with families and the local authority to improve attendance where it falls below expectations.

Leave of absence during term time (e.g. family holiday)

Leave of absence will only be granted, by the headteacher, in exceptional circumstances. This must be requested, in advance, through completion of a leave of absence request form obtainable from Mrs G Fox via absence@denefield.org.uk. **Holidays are unlikely to be authorised.**

Fixed Penalty Fines will be issued to all adults with parent responsibility, separately, should their child miss 10 half-day sessions (i.e. 5 school days) within a ten-week school period, where the absences are unauthorised. The level of fine is set by West Berkshire local authority and the school does not benefit financially from any aspect of the FPN process.

Students returning to school after a period of absence

Denefield staff will work collaboratively with parent / carers and their child who has, for any reason, been absent from school for an extended period of time, or who may be anxious about returning to school. This may include a key member of staff or other supportive measures.

Key contacts September 2023

Senior leader for attendance	Mrs Anna Williams	aws@denefield.org.uk
Attendance manager	Mrs Gemma Fox	gfx@denefield.org.uk
To report an absence	absence@denefield.org.uk ClassCharts (via the app)	
To discuss wider attendance or punctuality concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student's form tutor The attendance manager: Mrs Gemma Fox gfx@denefield.org.uk A welfare manager: Mrs Kelly Cook kck@denefield.org.uk Mrs Tam Hill thl@denefield.org.uk The student's head of house: kentwoodheadofhouse@denefield.org.uk langleyheadofhouse@denefield.org.uk norcotheadofhouse@denefield.org.uk sulhamheadofhouse@denefield.org.uk 	
Education Attendance Officer (West Berkshire local authority)	Alex Pilkington	0118 9167770

Timings of the school day (timings of any extraordinary days are published to parents and carers in advance)

Morning session	Begins at 8:30am, students must arrive by 8:28am	Registers close at 9:00am
Afternoon session	Begins at 1:35pm	Registers close at 2pm
End of the school day	Ends at 3:00pm	

Roles and responsibilities

The trustees will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies;
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, challenge trends, and help school leaders focus on cohorts and individual students who need it most.

The headteacher will:

- implement the school's Attendance and Punctuality policy within the school;
- ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to attendance and punctuality;
- consider any request for leave of absence during term time due to exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is the only person in school who can authorise a student's absence;
- Have an overview of the school's attendance including that of different cohorts.

The senior leader with responsibility for attendance and punctuality will:

- monitor and track whole school attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis;
- monitor and oversee intervention for cohorts such as disadvantaged and vulnerable students;
- compare school attendance with available local and national data;
- meet with the attendance manager and welfare managers on a fortnightly basis, and the Educational Welfare Officer on a termly basis to discuss attendance concerns and strategies for improvement;
- liaise with the attendance manager on a fortnightly basis regarding punctuality concerns;
- ensure that targeted support and intervention is put in place for students whose attendance falls below 92%;
- write to parents/carers of students whose attendance falls below 92% to inform them of concerns and available support;
- follow up with any staff not taking a timely or accurate register.

The attendance manager will work with the welfare managers (the welfare team) to:

- monitor student attendance and punctuality on a daily, weekly and termly basis
- contact home on the first day of absence for any student whose attendance is below 90%;
- contact home on the first day of absence for any student who is in receipt of the Pupil Premium, is looked after by the local authority or who has a social worker.
- identify students whose attendance is below 92% for support;
- discuss any attendance concerns or issues with welfare managers at their fortnightly meetings;
- attend termly meetings with the local authority Education Attendance Officer

- oversee the first day response process at 9.00am every morning to ensure that the parents of students with unexplained absence are notified. This will be in the form of text, e-mail or voicemail;
- produce weekly dashboard data for SLT and house teams;
- promote good attendance with parents, carers and students;
- organise events focused on promoting and raising attendance;
- celebrate and incentivise students good attendance, including contacting home and rewards;
- work with house teams to celebrate improved attendance and punctuality;
- work with the local authority, families and internal school interventions to support students who are EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance).

The House team will:

- ensure that the lates protocol is followed by all tutors in their house;
- support sanctions for students who are late to school or to lessons;
- work with the welfare team to identify reasons for absence and ensure that targeted support and intervention is put in place for students whose attendance falls below 92%;
- ensure that students who are consistently late are supported and sanctioned as necessary;
- promote, celebrate and reward excellent and/or significantly improved attendance and punctuality in assemblies and tutor groups.

Tutors will:

- take an accurate and timely register during morning and afternoon registration, marking students as present, absent or late;
- mark any students arriving after the late bell as late;
- send an late student to student reception if a late mark has not already been populated;
- monitor the attendance and punctuality of students in their tutor group;
- discuss concerns about absence or lateness with students and parents / carers, liaising with the welfare team;
- have conversations with parents / carers regarding attendance as requested by the attendance manager, logging conversations on CPOMS;
- raise any concerns regarding attendance or punctuality with their house team.

Subject teachers will:

- take an accurate register within the first five minutes of every lesson, marking students as present, absent or late;
- inform oncall@denefield.org.uk of any student with unexplained absence from their lesson;

The trust board will:

- monitor and review the attendance and punctuality policy through reports to the Standards Committee;
- monitor data on attendance by protected characteristics through termly reports to the Standards Committee;
- set annual attendance targets and monitor the school's progress towards these through termly and annual reports to the Standards Committee.

Parents / carers will:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and on time, meaning they must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend;
- Notify the school on each day of their absence by sending a message via ClassCharts or by emailing absence@denefield.org.uk by 8:30am;
- provide an explanation of their child's absence on the day s/he returns to school following absence if not already provided;
- while the school will not routinely request parents / carers for medical evidence for absence, if there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, it may be requested;
- ensure that any dental or medical appointments are, wherever possible, made for out-of-school hours (optician appointments are not considered medical);
- complete and submit a leave-of-absence request form if they need to request time off school for their child during term time due to exceptional circumstances. This can be obtained by emailing absence@denefield.org.uk.

Students will:

- attend school regularly and on time;
- attend every lesson on time;
- comply with any late sanctions put in place;
- sign in at student reception if they arrive after the late bell and they have not been registered at the school gate;
- sign out at student reception if they have permission to leave school for an appointment before the end of the school day. They will sign back in on their return.



Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be updated in response to new guidance and/or legislation as necessary.

Termly attendance reports are provided to the Standards Committee to enable the Governing Board to monitor data on student attendance by protected characteristics.

The Headteacher reports termly to the Trust Board to enable them to monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's policies, practices and procedures.

Who/what was consulted

The Senior Leadership Team

Educational Welfare Officer

Department for Education: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

Linked policies

Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Exclusions Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy

Appendix 1: attendance recording and procedures

Denefield uses SIMS to record attendance. Parents may access an overview of their child's attendance record via ClassCharts. A detailed attendance certificate can be provided on request to the attendance officer.

Morning registers are taken by form tutors. The attendance manager receives any messages from parents via ClassCharts or absence@denefield.org.uk and codes and annotates registers as appropriate. In the attendance manager's absence, office staff and welfare managers assist. Where a student is marked absent with no reason given, parents / carers are contacted via text message to alert them, after reasonable checks have been made to establish whether the student is on site. First day phone calls will be made by the attendance manager or welfare managers where contact with parents or carers has not been established. Generally, contact will be made on every day of absence to the parents / carers of students who may be disadvantaged or particularly vulnerable.

Codes used in registers are as follows*:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances



#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
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* Denefield School will make an informed decision on how to code individual absences in consultation with parents / carers where possible. The school will not normally require medical evidence for absence but reserves the right to do so.

Appendix 2a: Late arrival to school

Minutes late every day during the school year...	...is the equivalent of missing
5 minutes	3.4 days a year
10 minutes	6.9 days a year
15 minutes	10.3 days a year
20 minutes	13.8 days a year
30 minutes	20.7 days a year

Students are late if they are not at their tutor base by 8:30am and will be marked on the register as an L. Registers close at 9am, meaning that any student arriving after this time is marked on the registers using code U which counts as an unauthorised absence for the entire morning session. The following protocol is applied for any student with an L or a U mark:

A bell will ring at 8.28am in the morning. At this point every student is expected to be on the school grounds and making their way to their tutor base. A second bell will ring at 8:30am, when every student is expected to be in their tutor base. A member of staff will normally be at the school gate from 8:30 and will register students as late. If a student arrives when the member of staff has gone, they must sign in at student reception and pick up a late slip.

Sanctions for being late to school in the morning are notified to parents / carers via ClassCharts and completed on the same day follows:

- Up to 15 minutes late: 30-minute detention after school in the hall
- Over 15 minutes late: 1 hour detention after school in the hall

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents or carers should contact the school to give the reason why their child will be or was late to school.

Appendix 2b: Late arrival to lessons

All teaching staff take a register on ClassCharts promptly at the start of each lesson. A student is late if it is clear they have arrived distinctly after most other students – this is a matter for the teacher's professional judgement. If a student has gone to the toilet between lessons, gone to student reception or filled up a water bottle they are considered late unless they can provide a note or have asked the teacher's permission first. These students are marked on the register with an L.



Should a student be marked as late to a lesson, they will be sanctioned with a detention set on ClassCharts. Should the student not attend this detention, they will be given a two-hour detention after school.

Appendix 3: Steps and measures for addressing absence

Denefield's practices for addressing high rates of absence for individual students are in line with government guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Denefield's priority is to work with parents and carers together with external agency support before considering legal measures. Steps that the school and local authority take to support and encourage students and parents / carers to make school attendance a priority are as follows:

- Support students and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners (such as the Education Attendance and safeguarding services) should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. This will include meeting with students and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may also include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support.
- If the needs and barriers are individual to the student this may, in exceptional circumstances and with agreement with parents, carers, the student and the school, include provision of intervention such as mentoring, careers advice, off-site intervention, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment by the local authority.
- If engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents and student. This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance and may include a referral to the local authority Education Attendance Service. These meetings should clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the student and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but is also an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

If support has not been effective or engaged in by the family:

- Formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract may be put in place by the school with the local authority.
- If support is not appropriate such as taking term time holidays, the school may issue a fixed penalty notice.
- The school will intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially if absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).

- The local authority may prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

Actions the school is likely to take should attendance become a concern*

Attendance is beginning to be a concern (e.g. falls below 96%)	<p>Early intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorised as “group 2 attendance”, which notes that attendance is a concern. This is broadly students with an attendance of 90% - 95.9% • Welfare managers / tutors contact home to establish good relationships and communication with parents / carers and talk about what barriers may currently be in place • Support put in place as needed. For example, SEND support, access support, medical support, emotional support • Should there be no improvement in attendance, the attendance manager meets with parent / carers • School “watch list”, shared and discussed with SLT • Letter 1 is sent home to make parents / carers aware of any concerns
Attendance is not improving or is falling	<p>Focused intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily / regular phone calls if absent from school • Letter 2 sent to parents / carers sent invite to school for a meeting • Meeting held with parents / carer, welfare manager and attendance manager with targets put in place and a time scale for improvement • Home visits where appropriate • Review and update any support plans • Inclusion on the school “watch list”, shared and discussed with the senior leader responsible for attendance and the head of house • After a monitoring period, letter 3 is sent to parents / carers to explain the next steps should there be no improvement or engagement.

Attendance continues not to improve due to there being insufficient engagement in support offered by the school	Formal intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorised as “group 3 attendance”, which notes that there is a significant risk of under achievement. This is broadly students with an attendance that has dropped to 85% - 90% • Students in this category and below are classed by the Department for Education as <i>persistently absent</i> • A meeting is held with the parents / carers, attendance or welfare manager, the head of house and a senior member of staff with formal targets, times scales and outcomes formalised. The meeting is recorded in writing with all parties receiving a copy of agreed targets and time frames. • Parenting contract agreed
Attendance continues not to improve due to there being insufficient engagement in support offered by the school	Local authority intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorised as “group 4 attendance”, which notes that there is a severe risk of under achievement and / or a safeguarding concern. This is broadly students whose is below 85%. • Referral made to the local authority Education Attendance Service by the school • Should parents / carers not engage in support, the Education Welfare Service’s hierarchy of legal action is: formal parenting contracts, education supervision orders, fast-track intervention, attendance prosecution and parenting orders. • Disengagement with school or local authority support services may result in a referral to children’s services.

*The table of information above is general policy, however, it is acknowledged that individual students’ circumstances may require a bespoke approach where there are specific barriers to attendance, such as an acute medical condition. The school is obligated to work in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There will be circumstances where the process will not be appropriate for individual circumstances, for example, it may not be the tutor who has initial contact and conversations, or an attendance concern may become suddenly apparent and be raised with the attendance manager immediately.

Appendix 4: Leave of absence request

Request for Leave of Absence from school during term time

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all children can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Education is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and the Department for Education has recommended that leave of absences should not be taken in term time.

This school follows Government guidance when deciding whether to authorise leave of absences during term time. The government statutory guidance (September 2023) states:

“Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Leave of absence in term time has a serious detrimental impact on a student’s education and can be damaging to an individual’s development in school and educational chances.”

Leave of absence in term time is not a right and will not automatically be granted. Approval will not be given for leave of absence during examination weeks. Parents should check for information on such dates.

For any absence taken where a request has been refused by the Headteacher, the absence will be recorded as “Unauthorised Absence”.

Denefield implements Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to unauthorised absences during term time. West Berkshire’s Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence from school allows for the issue of a fine where a student is absent for five school days or more.

Denefield does not benefit financially from Fixed Penalty Notices and any fines are paid directly to the local authority who use the income solely on administering the FPN process. Parents and carers have no right of appeal against a fixed penalty notice.

If parents or carers wish to request term time holiday or leave for exceptional circumstances they should contact the Attendance Manager, Mrs G Fox, at absence@denefield.org.uk to request an application form at least four weeks in advance of the proposed absence.

Appendix 5: Sixth Form attendance and punctuality

The school's expectations with regard to attendance and punctuality apply to all Sixth Form students. Sixth Form students are expected to attend school for all lessons, briefings and tutor time.

Attendance

- The Head of Sixth Form and the Sixth Form Welfare Manager, with tutors, have a responsibility for monitoring student attendance on a daily, weekly and termly basis;
- Students who have attendance below the school's target of 96% are closely monitored by tutors, the Welfare Manager and the Head of Sixth Form.

Stages of intervention:

If the student's attendance is between 96%-100%:

- Internal monitoring
- ClassCharts sent home on day of student absent if not reported by parents/carers or authorised by the Headteacher.

If the student's attendance has fallen below 96%:

Tutor intervention

- The tutor will arrange a meeting with parents/carers and student;
- Student will be placed on attendance report to tutor with specific targets set.

If the student's attendance has fallen below 92% and tutor intervention has been unsuccessful:

Student manager intervention

- The student manager will arrange a meeting with parents/carers and student;
- The student manager will place student on a four-week contract with specific targets which will be monitored daily and reviewed weekly.

If the student's attendance continues to fall below 90% after the four-week targeted support:

Head of Sixth Form intervention

- The Head of Sixth Form will arrange a meeting with parents/carers and student; the student will be placed on two-week final contract which will be monitored daily and reviewed with parents/carers at the end of the two-week period; The Head of Sixth Form may escalate to the Headteacher if there is no significant improvement in attendance;
- The student may have post-16 bursary payments withdrawn (if applicable);
- The student's place in the sixth form may be withdrawn.

Absence

The school must be notified by parents / carers in advance of foreseen absence. The following absences will be authorised:

- University open days;
- Interviews (university, college, apprenticeship or post-18 job) ;
- Driving tests;
- Scholarship programmes;
- Relevant and appropriate work experience;
- Community service.

Absence will not be authorised for any of the following:

- Driving lessons;
- Shopping trips;
- Studying at home (outside of allocated study leave times);
- Family holidays;
- Any other non-educational activity which is deemed inappropriate.

Punctuality

Teachers will mark students who are late to their sessions as late (code L). If a student receives three late marks in a half term they will be given an hour's detention, held after school on a Tuesday or Thursday with the Head of Sixth Form.