Policy Title:	ATTENDANCE POLICY	
Author:	Deputy Head	Checked by: The Head
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1. Principles of the Policy

This policy gives due regard to the DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance July 2026' , 'Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance 2026', 'The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024' and 'Children Missing Education 2025'.

School attendance is essential for the wellbeing of students. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the School will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. DfE research has shown that absence can have a considerable negative impact on a child's academic achievement. Securing good attendance works alongside the effective management of behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing. It must involve concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, as well as external partners.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Every child of compulsory school age must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. See grounds for 'authorised' absences below.

The School is required to classify each half day absence as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, information on the cause of each absence is required. Authorised absences are for

morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a reason such as for illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes keeping a pupil off for trivial reasons, truancy, and absences or late arrivals after 9:00 am which have not been properly explained.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Deputy Head has ultimate responsibility for school attendance, the day-to-day implementation of which is delegated to the Head of Senior School and the Head of Prep School and Pre-Prep.

The Deputy Head is the Lead Senior Attendance Champion, supported by a team of Attendance Champions comprising: Head of Senior School, Head of Prep and Pre-prep and the administration team. This Attendance Champion team receives internal training in how to interpret and analyse attendance data and best practice with intervention to improve school attendance. This team shares responsibility for promoting a whole-school culture of positive school attendance, ensuring regular communication with parents and students to embed a clear understanding of the importance of school attendance for academic success and personal development and wellbeing.

The school's Senior Attendance Champion (the Deputy Head) will ensure all school-based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.

The Governing Body has responsibility to: regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it; take an active role in attendance improvement, support the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set a whole school culture of positive school attendance; ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties; use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed; ensure school staff receive training on attendance.

The Senior Attendance Champion can be contacted via the school on 01483 277313 or via email tsouthee@dokschool.org

3. Requests for Term Time Absences

If a pupil is going to be absent from school for reasons other than ill health, this must be discussed in advance with the school on each separate occasion either via email or on the phone. **Parents should, wherever possible, schedule medical/dental appointments outside of school hours.**

Requests for planned absence should be made in writing and in good time as follows:

For medical (doctors / dentist) appointments during school time, parents should inform Form Tutors and the office (absences@dokschool.org) in good time.

The School may ask parents to provide evidence of medical/dental appointments, especially where a pupil's attendance is already under 90%. Acceptable forms of evidence could include: a doctor's appointment slip, consultant's letter, or text from the GP.

All other requests for term-time leave of absence for both Prep and Senior School must be made to:

For Senior Students: The Head of Senior School, Mr Wyllie (awyllie@dokschool.org)

For Pre-prep and Prep: The Head of Pre-prep and Prep School, Mr Wright (cwright@dokschool.org)

These will be reviewed by the Deputy Head or Head.

Please note that requests for term-time leave of absence will not be granted unless circumstances are exceptional. The Department for Education does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Requests for leave in genuinely exceptional circumstances should be made by submitting a request, with supporting evidence, via the email addresses above, with a minimum of two weeks' notice to allow sufficient time for the request to be considered and decided upon. Suitable evidence might, for example, be a wedding invitation, or a letter/email inviting a child to participate in an exceptional opportunity, such as a national sporting competition.

If a term-time leave of absence is granted in exceptional circumstances, then it is unlikely that any future term-time leave of absence would be granted for the same child. Records are kept from year-to-year documenting these requests and tracking where pupils have been absent, including at the start/end of school holiday periods. These records are consulted when the School is considering any request to authorise term-time leaves of absence.

Term-time travel due to the availability or cost of flights is not a valid exceptional circumstance for a leave of absence and will not be authorised by the School.

Students leaving the school for a prearranged absence during the school day should ensure that they sign out at the Front Office.

4. Unplanned Absences

On the first day of an unplanned absence, parents should contact the School Office on 01483 277313 or by email the School Office (absences@dokschool.org) and Form Tutors before 08:45. The School Office is open from 08:00.

Where the unplanned absence continues for more than one day, parents should continue to follow the above protocols until the child returns to school.

If a parent does not report their child's unplanned absence, the office will try to contact them by phone and/or email. Priority will be given to contacting parents of the youngest and most vulnerable members of the school community first. Where there is no prompt response to confirm the child's safety and whereabouts, the school will continue to contact parents via phone and email throughout the morning. Should the absence not be explained by the afternoon session, the Deputy Head will be informed and will leave a message for parents via email and phone, that should we not hear by the end of the day, we will need to report the absence and lack of contact from parents, to the Local Authority and take advice from them in line with our mandatory safeguarding duties. Parents may be required to provide proof of illness (e.g. prescription or GP appointment card).

5. Lateness

Pupils must attend registration on time in order to be marked as present. Parents are expected to ensure that pupils are present at the start of registration and support them in being punctual.

Registration times for each area of the school are as follows (students may be dropped off from 08:00 or 07:30 if attending Breakfast (Yr1 and above):

Morning registration:
Pre-prep: 8:30
Prep School: 8:20
Senior School: 8:20

Afternoon registration:
Pre-prep: 1.10
Prep School: 1.20
Senior School: 1.30

Form tutors will monitor the late arrivals of pupils and advise SLT about any regular patterns and interventions such as targeted help and support for the family to ensure these instances are reduced.

Pupils are reminded that they should be in school for all available AM/PM sessions. Sports afternoons (Tues for 9-11 and Wed for 5-8) are timetabled sessions and we expect 100% attendance to all sessions. Any non-attendance at games afternoons will be recorded as 'unauthorised absences' and should the number of them be significant enough then it will be reported to the local authority.

6. Children Absent from Education and Children Missing from Education

Children missing education (CME) is defined as those who are of a compulsory school age, but are either not registered at a school or else not receiving suitable education in place of a school setting.

Children absent in Education refers to students whose attendance falls below the expected standard but are registered with the school.

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority particularly where children go missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day in conjunction with 'Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Surrey County Council Safeguarding Children Missing Education Policy.

Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Duke of Kent School follows up any unexplained absences and will report to the local authority pupils who have been missing from school for more than ten continuous school days. Should a child be absent from both registrations in a day without contact from parents explaining why, the DSL will be informed to investigate. The school will hold two emergency contact numbers for students where possible.

Registers are checked each morning by 9:30 and any unreported absences are followed up with a phone call / email to parents.

To help deal with students unable to come to school due to mental health, the school will follow guidance in the Department for Education's Summary of Responsibilities where a Mental Health Issue is Affecting Attendance and Support for Pupils where Mental Health is Affecting Attendance (both Feb 2023.)

The school recognises that children being absent, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods and exclusion from may be indicators of abuse and neglect, including the exploitation of children. The DSL will regularly liaise with members of staff with responsibility for behaviour and attendance to ensure risk is identified and appropriate intervention is in place to protect children from harm

7. Strategies for Improving Attendance

The School follows these steps to maintain and improve school attendance:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective early intervention strategies in place.

- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them, working with the local authority and other partners where appropriate
- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the School's ethos and policies, including through communication with pupils and parents.

8. Monitoring Attendance

The School has robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts and groups (EAL/SEND). The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils, cohorts or groups that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:

- A termly review of attendance for the whole school by the Deputy Head.
- A weekly look at absences by the Safeguarding / Pastoral team in their weekly meeting.

The trigger point for interventions are as follows:

Attendance below 90% in a half term	Parents are written to informing them of the concern over attendance
Attendance below 90% over two half terms or attendance below 80% for a half term	Parents are invited in for a meeting with a member of the Senior Management Team to discuss the attendance concerns
Attendance below 80% for two half terms or more	Parents are invited in for a further meeting with a member of the Senior Management team and a referral to Education Welfare will be proposed. An attendance contract will be created which will include agreed targets, support strategies, review dates and pupil voice where appropriate. This will be signed by parents and pupil.
Attendance below 50%	The school recognises that pupils whose absence falls below 50% as severely absent and will implement intensive support and safeguarding measures as appropriate.

The school will also have an annual Attendance Review with a member of the Surrey Inclusion Team.

As part of the School's monitoring process, parents should be aware of the following:

- If a pupil has continued absence, without parental contact, this will be reported to the DSL and treated as a safeguarding concern. External agencies, including the Local Authority may be contacted.
- Requests for absence due to holidays during term time will be declined. The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Head must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Without this permission, the absence will remain as unauthorised. The time allocated for half term holidays and holidays at Christmas, Easter and the Summer are particularly generous.
- Parents are encouraged to make dental and medical appointments outside of school hours, but we recognise that this is not always possible and facilitate where possible. Where medical appointments are available online, we have on occasion facilitated this taking place at school, reducing the need to be absent for a whole session.

9. Absences due to mental health, physical ill health, SEN or disabilities

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. These students are still expected to attend school regularly and school will communicate clear expectations to parents and work alongside parents to limit barriers to attendance as much as possible. Parents will, in turn, work with school to ensure their child/children attend school regularly.

Some young people, including some of those individuals with long-term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, can face additional barriers to attendance. Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the School will have the same attendance expectations and ambition for these students as it does for any other pupil, but additional support may be provided. The school will support pupils to maintain connection with education during periods of difficulty.

This support may include:

- General pastoral support to improve attendance whilst supporting the underlying health issue
- The Form Tutor or Senior member of staff calls parents on the third or fourth consecutive school day that a pupil is absent through illness, to check in and offer support.
- Consider adjustments to practise and policies to help meet the needs of individuals who are struggling to attend school as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability.

- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.
- Make use of mental health support teams where available and consider whether additional support from external partners (local authority, GP, CAMHS, etc) would be appropriate and make recommendations to parents.
- Where external support is provided, work with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

In any case of absence due to illness, the School may request medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with statutory guidance.

10. Part time Timetables

Children of compulsory school age are entitled to full-time education, however, there may be exceptional circumstances where a temporary part-time timetable might be in a child's best interest, for example in the case of a serious ongoing physical or mental ill health. In these cases, decisions about the part-time timetable arrangement will be made by the Deputy Head, Head, or Head of Section, in discussion with relevant colleagues and with clear agreement between school and parents that this arrangement is for the shortest time possible. A pastoral support plan will be put in place and the arrangement will be reviewed at least fortnightly. In the case of a part time timetable the student will be registered as code 'C2'.

11. Attendance Codes (in accordance with statutory DfE guidance)

Code	**Meaning**	**Further Notes…**
/ \	Present	
L	Late	Missed the register being taken but arrived within the registration window.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Attending another school at the request of the Local Authority
V	Trip or Visit	Attending a trip or visit arranged by school
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity	Staff can refer to Team Sheets to see who is attending. Any amendments for those absent will be made by the Office.
W	Attending Work Experience	Attending arranged with the school
B	Attending any other approved	Any other activity not covered by V/P/W. It

	Educational Activity	must be approved by the school. These might be transition days at other schools.
C1	Leave of Absence for participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	This could be a theatre or dance performance that is licensed. Must be approved by school.
M	Attending a medical or dental appointment	This should be agreed with the school and the school informed.
J1	Attending an interview for employment or another school / college	This could be college interviews or a taster visit to a new school that the pupil may be moving to.
S	Study Leave	Pupils off revising for GCSEs.
X	Non-compulsory school age.	Nursery students who are under compulsory school age.
C2	Subject to a part-time timetable	When, in the pupil's best interests, a part time timetable is put in place.
D	Dual registered at another school.	The pupil is registered at more than one school and is attending the other institution.
C	Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances	A leave of absence that the school has approved. Each request must have come through the school in good time.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parents are travelling with them.
R	Religious Observance	The pupil is absent due to the religious body the parent(s) belong to.
I	Illness (Physical / Mental)	The pupil is unable to attend due to physical or mental health related issues.
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded	The pupil is suspended or excluded on disciplinary grounds.
Q	Unable to attend school because of access arrangements that are provided by the local authority.	Unable to get in because of transportation limitations to get them to school that should be provided by the LA.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided becoming unavailable.	School is not within walking distance and the usual transport provided by the school is not available.

Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Disruption caused by a local, national or international emergency.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.	Parts of the school unable to be used so not able to attend.
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed.	School closed unexpectedly - adverse weather, water shortage.
Y5	Pupil is in criminal justice detention.	In police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance / law.	Government rules in place to stop the spread of infection or disease.
Y7	Unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause.	Used only where no other attendance code applies and the circumstances are unavoidable.
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil on holiday but permission not granted or sought by parents.
N	Reason for absence not yet established.	These should be immediately investigated and changed when reason determined. If reason not found within 5 days - this moves to an O
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason provided or school is not satisfied with the reason.
U	Arrived after the registration period had closed.	Arrives after registration closes but during the AM or PM session.
Z	Prospective pupil not on attendance register	To help with roll over admin.
#	Planned Whole School Closure	Holidays / Bank Holidays

Policy Owner	Deputy Head (Named Senior Attendance Champion)
Reviewed by	SLT