



Headteacher: Mrs N Goodridge

# Attendance Policy

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Governor approved	14 May 2026	Key person/people	DHT
Model Policy		Model localised	
Pupil leadership team review	Y / N / N/A		

## Aims/Introduction

At Danebury School we believe that regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We value the attendance of all pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a [wide range of evidence](#) as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. [Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance;
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences;
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant

legislation.

## Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
  - Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
  - [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
  - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents> [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)
  - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
  - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
  - [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
  - [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(July 2018\)](#)
  - [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)

In addition section 7 of the [Education Act 1996](#) states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A "Parent" is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

## Roles and Responsibilities

At Danebury we believe that improving school attendance is everyone's business. That it is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
<b>Senior Attendance Lead</b>	Mrs A Collins	collinsa@danebury.hispmat.org
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	Mrs C Ellard	ellardc@danebury.hispmat.org
<b>Named Governor/Trustee for Attendance</b>	<i>Mrs J Lehrle-Fry</i>	<i>chair@danebury.hispmat.org</i>

## Governors/Trustees

The Local Governing Board/Trustee Board of Danebury recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.
- Where attendance is below 96%, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

**The Senior Leadership Team** at Danebury will

- Set a clear vision for maintaining and improving attendance.
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors/Trustees and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

- Record interventions appropriately to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated. Use appropriate language and differentiate between fact and opinion.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.
- Work with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Take an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **The Attendance Officer will**

- Monitor, analyse and report attendance data.
- Ensure first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents/carers.
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Provide weekly attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher.
- Work with education welfare officers to tackle persistent and severe absence.
- Manage individual pupil casework files.
- Make referrals to appropriate external agencies.
- Support the coordination of individual action plans causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help hub referral and/or the implementation of a parenting contract.
- Advise the senior leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the head of school) when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

**All staff at Danebury will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Danebury requests that **Parents:**

- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.40am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return, following this with medical evidence where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences: for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Keep to any attendance contracts/agreements that they make with the school and/or local authority.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues
- Only request leave in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.

### **Pupils will:**

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or guardians to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

### **Categorising Attendance and Procedures**

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Present at an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

“Regular” attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

An “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- Exceptional family circumstance, agreed by the Headteacher

An “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

The school day starts at 8:40am and ends at 3:10pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:10am.  
The register for the second session will be taken at 12:35pm and will be kept open until 12:55pm.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always recorded.

## **Lateness and Punctuality**

At Danebury all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8:40am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main and provide a reason for their absence. Parents should also complete the [online absence form](#) for lateness.

All pupils arriving at or after the school register has officially closed will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of

registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

## **Unplanned absence procedures**

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by:

- Report via the Arbor app
- Call the school office on 01264 810555 and select 'option 1'
- Email the School Attendance Officer [attendance@danebury.hispmat.org](mailto:attendance@danebury.hispmat.org)

On the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

## **Following up unplanned absence**

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day contact procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:10am and where no reason for absence is known.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- If there is no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of staff if absences persist
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, a penalty notice or other legal intervention, as appropriate.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

### **Leave of Absence**

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that

Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Danebury, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Head of School and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#) Danebury School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave. A copy of the [leave of absence](#) form can be found here. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. Danebury will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a fixed penalty notice is issued or consider prosecution.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Head of School, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

### **Authorised absence**

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see below)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people,

bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

### **Authorised absence for medical appointments and illness**

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that a parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must sign out and wait in reception for a parent to collect them. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. Parents should consider the NHS guidance for gauging the need for an absence from school [Is My Child Too Ill For School?](#) We will invite parents to attend an Education Support Meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the School Nursing Team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and local authority regarding supporting children with health issues.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Head of School. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school, including the availability of cheaper holidays.

### **Reporting to parents**

All schools have a legal obligation to report pupils' attendance regularly to parents. At Danebury we do this on a half-termly basis. Parents receive an attendance report that identifies the overall attendance percentage and half-termly percentage, the average attendance for the pupil's year group and the number of sessions/days/lessons missed through absence.

### **Attendance Rewards and Interventions**

Danebury School's aim is for all pupils to attend school for a minimum 98% of the time. Attendance data is monitored on a weekly basis by Tutors, Middle and Senior Leaders. Pupils who achieve excellent which in many cases is 100% attendance each week receive a positive email home and achievement points. Students with medical conditions will be set individual targets. Attendance is celebrated in assemblies, end of half-term reward events and the school newsletter. Pupils are encouraged to track their own attendance in their school planners weekly and are reminded regularly of the benefits of good attendance.

At Danebury we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

"Persistent absenteeism" (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

"Severe absence" (SA) as:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

### **Support Systems**

At Danebury we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Attendance reports – Tutors or Heads of Year monitoring attendance for improvement over a set period of time
- Parent meetings - working closely with parents through regular communication, home visits, and meetings to ensure awareness of attendance and support improvement.
- Attendance contracts – more formal contracts made between pupils, parents and the school to set attendance goals, expectations and consequences.
- Key staff check-ins: identified staff members may have frequent check-ins with pupils who have attendance challenges to discuss progress and provide encouragement.
- Where necessary, consider the use of reduced timetables as a temporary measure to support reintroduction to school
- Referral to external agencies for additional support.

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

### **Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level could cause considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 90 sessions (45 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

Danebury will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement home visits to ensure pupils are seen every 10 days by Family Support Worker and Attendance Officer.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

### **Reduced Timetables**

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. We will not use a reduced timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family

In line with local authority guidance, we will notify the Education & Inclusion Service of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

### **Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND**

It is widely recognised that some groups of pupils are more vulnerable to poor attendance than others. Pupils with medical needs, SEN, Disabilities, Young Carers, Pupils with a social worker or in receipt of the pupil premium are likely to require more targeted support. At Danebury these groups are carefully monitored and intervention targeted appropriately. If a pupil with a diagnosed medical condition has a period of long-term absence, parents/carers need to contact the SENCo, who will work alongside the attendance staff to ensure a designated key worker is identified.

For vulnerable pupils, meetings will be held with the SENCo, a member of the pastoral team, medical professionals (as appropriate), parents and the pupil to ensure that a reintegration is structured to facilitate a smooth transition. Where appropriate, personalised timetables and supported lessons will be arranged, to allow for a phased return to school. Social time is also supported so that pupils who have been absent for prolonged periods can feel confident as they reconnect with their peers.

Parents need to provide medical evidence to the school if a child has regularly low attendance, due to medical needs. If a child is deemed too ill to attend school by medical professionals, then a Medical Referral will be made to the Inclusion Support Service. Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that are related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

Danebury School monitors attendance, absence and punctuality data on a daily, weekly and half-termly basis. It is analysed by Heads of Year and Senior Leaders to identify patterns of absence and apply early intervention to support families. Attendance data is also discussed on a Trust level as an additional layer of support.

### **Monitoring attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request; it has granted the DfE access to its management system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

### **Analysing attendance**

Danebury will

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **Using data to improve attendance**

Danebury will

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year and Tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the SENDCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Pupil Premium Lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

## Sanctions

### Attendance letters

At Danebury we will inform you every half term what your child's attendance. If a pupil's attendance begins to drop, we will send letters to parents highlighting the data and offering support to improve. The timescale for the letters is below:

	Attendance	Sessions/days missed	Lessons missed at Danebury	Attendance Letter
Good	97% and below	10 sessions/5 days	25	Letter 1
Requires improvement	95% and below	20 sessions/10 days	50	Letter 2 + additional intervention
Cause for concern (persistently absent)	90% and below	40 sessions/20 days	100	Letter 3 + additional intervention
Significant cause for concern	85% and below	58 sessions/29 days	145	Further action

### Penalty notices

There may be occasions where the school will need to make use of the full range of potential sanctions to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will always be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

The Head of School (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks – 5 days)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)

- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

### **Deletions from the Register**

At Danebury we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Danebury we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow Hampshire local authority's Children Missing Education procedures and will inform the Education & Inclusion Service of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Hampshire local authority will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Danebury will follow Hampshire's [CME Policy](#) when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, and the school will carry out joint enquiries with Hampshire local authority to establish the whereabouts of the child.

### **Related Policies**

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Admissions
- Behaviour Management & Wellbeing
- SEND

## Appendix 1

### Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is

		not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence

<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2 – Attendance Interventions Threshold Document

<b>Attendance Interventions Threshold Document</b>		Reminder percentages are a guide. Consideration should be given to number of absences from school and reasons given when identifying support for student/family.		
<p><b>Attendance above 96% -</b></p> <p>Schools should promote good attendance in school. Ideas may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance displays.</li> <li>- School-wide assemblies</li> <li>- Regular attendance updates in newsletters</li> <li>- Attendance displays in school.</li> <li>- Communication with all stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p>Schools should regularly analyse school and student attendance data, and identify any areas of concern. There should be clear systems in place to raise a concern about attendance. Parents should regularly be updated on their child's attendance in school linked to attainment.</p> <p>Schools should communicate the school attendance policy with all stakeholders, and parents and pupils should have an awareness of what is expected of them.</p>	<p><b>Attendance &gt;95%</b> Up to 10 days absent in an academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Class teacher/tutor to discuss attendance with student where age-appropriate, and to discuss concerns with family.</li> <li>- Regular contact with family to update on progress and achievements as well as academic attainment.</li> <li>- Write to parents to explain concerns, linked to attainment, sharing attendance data so parents can see the absence patterns.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Attendance &gt;92%</b> Severe risk of underachievement, upwards of 22 days absent in an academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If absences continue calls to the family may require intervention from Year/House Manager at Secondary, Attendance Officer and in some cases Senior Leaders.</li> <li>- As the child is at risk of becoming Persistently Absent the case (including all school actions to date) should be discussed in school attendance meetings.</li> <li>- Regular contact with family to update on progress and achievements as well as academic attainment.</li> <li>- Write to parents to explain concerns, linked to attainment, sharing attendance data so parents can see the absence patterns.</li> <li>- School should consider an Early Help Plan support for the family.*</li> <li>- School should be updating all parents on their child's attendance each half term.</li> <li>- Each child who is Persistently Absent should have an individualised plan to support an improvement in attendance.*</li> <li>- E&amp;I may contact family at this point (for SLA Schools) which often identifies issues impacting on attendance.</li> </ul> <p>Additional support offered by E&amp;I for SLA Schools.*</p>	<p><b>Attendance &gt;90%</b> Student is recorded as Persistently Absent Extreme risk of underachievement. Upwards of 22 school days absent in the academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student should have an Education Support Plan. Review Actions from this meeting in due course.*</li> <li>- Consider if additional SEN support is needed.</li> <li>- Where a child already has an EHCP an interim review should be held.</li> <li>- Consider a Supporting Families Referral for families on Early Help. (Cases open to E&amp;I can be processed at this stage without an Early Help)</li> <li>- Is there a role for support from the MHST/Wellbeing Service/Youth Trust/CAMHS due to Mental Health Issues?</li> <li>- Consider if support from Education Psychology Team is required</li> <li>- Is there a need for Speech and Language Support</li> <li>- Regular contact with family to update on progress and achievements as well as academic attainment.</li> <li>- Write to parents to explain concerns, linked to attainment, sharing attendance data so parents can see the absence patterns.</li> <li>- School may wish to consider an Early Help Plan support for the family.*</li> <li>- School should be updating all parents on their child's attendance each half term.</li> <li>- Each child who is Persistently Absent should have an individualised plan to support an improvement in attendance.*</li> <li>- E&amp;I may contact family at this point (for SLA Schools) which often identifies issues impacting on attendance.</li> </ul> <p>Additional support offered by E&amp;I for SLA Schools.*</p>	<p><b>Attendance &gt;85%</b> Extreme risk of underachievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social Care intervention if required.</li> <li>- Schools should consider Early Help Assessment to identify need. (E&amp;I will support SLA schools with this).*</li> <li>- Family to be signposted to support by professionals considering Local Offer.*</li> <li>- Consider behaviour plan to reduce suspensions and on-site truancy.*</li> <li>- Is parenting support needed*</li> <li>- Would the student benefit from AP to assist in reengaging with education.</li> <li>- Consider Outreach support.</li> <li>- E&amp;I can access medical advice via school nursing team, or other services such as CAMHS and GP's*</li> <li>- E&amp;I to consider legal options, including Truancy Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order, or parental prosecution.*</li> <li>- Non-SLA Schools will need to request a place at the School Attendance Enforcement Panel to make a case for legal intervention.</li> </ul> <p>Additional support offered by E&amp;I for SLA Schools.*</p>

**Appendix 3**  
**Summary of Actions**

Time/ Trigger	Attendance Profile	Action	By Whom
Day 1 of absence	Absence for any reason specified by parent  Absence not reported by parent	Parent to contact school via absence reporting procedure  Alert to be sent to parent as soon as possible  If child has a Social Worker they will be informed	Parent  Attendance Officer  Safeguarding Manager
Day 3 of absence	Absence not reported by parent, attempts to contact parent unsuccessful	School to initiate "Child Missing In Education" procedure, IARF or call to Police	Attendance Officer/ DSL
Attendance below 94%	Single absence due to illness  Sporadic absence or repeated absences due to illness	Monitor for improvement via Attendance tracker  Letter 1, monitor attendance for 4 weeks	KS Leader  KS Leader/ Attendance Officer
Pupil has received Letter 1, no improvement in attendance	Attendance falls further below 94%.  Continuing sporadic absence or single absence due to illness	Letter 2 + parent meeting.  Monitor attendance for further 4 weeks	KS Leader/ Attendance Officer
Pupil has received Letter 2, no improvement in attendance	Attendance falls further below 94%.  Continuing sporadic absence or single absence due to illness	Legal Intervention Team Referral	KS Leader/ DSL

LIT referral submitted. Absence of 10 sessions out of 100 possible		Penalty Notice issues	Attendance Officer/ DSL
Absence of 5 days or more due to non-approved holiday		Penalty Notice issued	Attendance Officer/ DSL

### Appendix 3

#### Copy of attendance letter 1

Dear «salutation»

#### RE: ATTENDANCE

Further to the letter that we sent out at the end of Autumn Term 1 which explained the process the school would follow to support and encourage good attendance (a copy of which is on our website), I am writing to you because *[pupil's name]* has had *[insert numbers]* sessions absent from school so far this year. If this pattern were to continue it could mean that they would fall below the 95% attendance expected at the end of the academic year.

Please note that each day is made up of two sessions, recorded during the morning tutor and lesson 4.

The school has a duty to provide you with this information in order to promote improvement in rates of attendance so that, where possible, your child is able to reach the 95% attendance target set by the Department of Education at the end of the academic year. We are writing to you at this early stage so that you as a parent or carer can have a conversation with your child about the importance of attendance.

Please note that ultimately it is up to you as a parent/carer whether you think your child is well enough to attend school.

We fully accept that in many circumstances, illness is a genuine and unavoidable reason for absence. However, we are directed by government legislation to ensure absence is only taken as a last resort. In light of this, we would like to share the following information with you:

Attendance of pupil	Approximate days absent by the end of the year	School time missed by the end of 5 years
100%	0	0
95-99%	10	1/4 of a year

90-95%	20	1/3 of a year
85-90%	30	1/2 of a year
Below 85%	More than 30	3/4 -1 whole year

All guidance is in our attendance policy, which is accessible through the school website, including the next steps that will be taken if attendance drops further. You may also find the following website useful:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

We would very much like to support you and your child, so please do contact your child's Tutor or Head of Key Stage as soon as possible, if you would like to discuss any issues or barriers that your child has in attending school, and how your child's attendance might be improved.

Thank you for your continued support and we trust your child's attendance will improve.

Yours sincerely,

## Appendix 4

### Copy of attendance letter 2

Dear «salutation»

Re: [Student's name]'s Attendance

I am writing to you because [Student's name] has had at least [insert number] sessions absent from school for illness or other reasons so far this year. If this pattern should continue it could mean that they would fall below the 95% attendance expected at the end of the academic year.

Please note that each day is made up of two sessions, recorded during the morning tutor and lesson 4.

Since our previous communication [Student's name] attendance has not improved. I am therefore informing you that the school will not be able to authorise any further absence for illness unless medical evidence is provided.

The school has a duty to provide you with this information in order to promote improvement in rates of attendance so that, where possible, your child is able to reach the 95% attendance target set by the Department of Education at the end of the academic year.

The guidance for our procedures on this is in our attendance policy which is accessible through our website. This

includes the next steps that will be taken if attendance drops further, which could include a Penalty Notice being issued, or being referred to the Legal Intervention Team.

I enclose the following additional information on attendance that you may find useful:

Registration Certificate which shows [Student's name] current attendance percentage.

Hampshire County Council Leaflet on attendance

I would very much like to support you and your child, so please contact me as soon as possible if you would like to discuss any issues or barriers that your child has in attending school, and how your child's attendance might be improved.

Thank you for your support in your child's attendance. I trust that your child's attendance will improve.

Yours sincerely

## **Appendix 5**

### **My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any unexplained attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's form tutor, Year Leader or Attendance Officer, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets a suitable breakfast, gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education, chat to them about the things they have learnt, their friends and even what they had for lunch.

## **EBSA**

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. A clear distinction is made between those that are absent from school due to truancy and those that are absent from school due to the specific emotional distress that they experience around attending school.

School plays a very important role in identifying factors associated with pupil vulnerability and the potential triggers leading to EBSA. See EBSA documentation from Hampshire January 2021 – [Emotional Based School Avoidance](#)

