



DEVONPORT HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Named person: R Morgan

Category: Statutory

Review: Bi-annually or when there are significant changes

Date to be reviewed: Summer 2022

This policy has been reviewed with regard to the work/life balance of staff.

Adopted by the Governors' Policy Committee on: 14/07/20

Ratified at the Full Governors' meeting on: 16/07/20

Aim

Devonport High School for Girls (DHSG) is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all students. We believe ~~that~~ if students are to fully benefit from education, excellent attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. As a school we will do all ~~that~~ we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Objectives

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality.
- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents/carers of attendance and punctuality issues.
- To identify causes of non-attendance and take action.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the School.
- To work with the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and/or other appropriate agencies to support good attendance & and punctuality.
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance through our rewards system.
- Work towards 100% attendance for each individual during the academic year.

Attendance Targets

- To provide a safe, happy learning environment where students feel valued and welcome.
- To monitor and record any absences with clear communication links between all parties.
- To work with and support individual students and families where any attendance issues have been identified, and where necessary and with agreement, engage partnership support through external agencies.
- To link attendance data with performance data and use in target setting.

The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are responsible for making sure their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001, a parent/carer also commits an offence if, knowing their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to ensure they attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

From September 2015 students are required to stay in education, training, begin an apprenticeship or work 20 hours while in part time education until the age of 18. Parents/carers are required to adhere to and be cognisant of the Sixth Form Learning Contract which clearly states acceptable attendance requirements. If any issues arise a review of student progress with parents/carers will be called.

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013 and are as follows:

'Term-time holiday'

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

National data for secondary school attendance informs DHSG the benchmark for good attendance is 94.8% Analyse School Performance (ASP) 2019. This is the standard for comparison that which is used by OFSTED to make judgements and as a school we will use this to set a threshold of 95% attendance when considering an application for leave of absence.

There is no national benchmark available at present for data statistics for the Sixth Form. However, the context of our school, based upon attendance data for Ofsted league tables, indicate that 95% is also an appropriate threshold for Post 16.

This policy takes into account the Statutory Guidance "Children missing education September 2016" and "School attendance: Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities July 2019".

Persistent Absence (PA)

The Department for Education (DfE) have set the threshold for 'Persistent Absence' at 90% or below attendance. PA indicates a significant level of non-attendance and will be approached as a concern in relation to student support. We will work closely with the (EWS) and families to address attendance that falls, or is likely to fall below this threshold.

For Sixth Form "Persistent Absence" is set at 90% attendance based upon Ofsted league tables. Where PA occurs, we will work closely with both student and families to address attendance which falls below this threshold.

Authorised Absence (AA)

Authorised absence is absence which has been authorised by the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), or other authorised representative of the school as per the Attendance Policy. Parents/carers may must submit requests for leave of absence and advise the school of absences due to illness and medical appointments. External examinations, external rehearsals, etc. are to be requested on a leave of absence form in advance of the absence.

Request for leave of absence for holiday in term time will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised Absence (UA)

Unauthorised Absence is absence without leave from an authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

It includes:

1. alleged sickness, without medical or other justifiable verification.
2. condoned - with the approval of one or both parents/carers.
3. caused - by failing to comply with standards or school rules.
4. truancy - absent from school without parents/carers knowledge.
5. absconding - leaving school after being registered present.

In the Sixth Form, students are allowed to self-certify, however, where they fall below the PA threshold self-certification is not accepted.

Procedures

The school register is a legal document ~~that~~ which must be maintained accurately. The School has a statutory obligation to make registers available to the Local Authority and HM Inspectors.

The EWS will carry out inspection of registers on a regular basis ensuring ~~that~~ schools are implementing good practice and ~~that~~ legal requirements are met.

Statutory Registration Periods at DHSG are:

- Morning Session: 08.50 am – 09.05 am
- Afternoon Session: 14.35 pm – 14.40 pm

The morning registration period takes place with a Form Tutor. It is their responsibility that the register is completed electronically and accurately via Student Information Management System (SIMs) and closed at 09.05 am.

The information will be recorded and viewed at 09.30 am. If the register has not been taken, a message will be sent to the individual Form Tutor reminding them of their duty.

The same will apply to the afternoon session; however, the register will be taken by the Subject Class Teacher as the session is at the beginning of Period 5. The registration period closes at 14.40 pm.

Parents/carers are asked to ring the school every day their child is away from school between the hours of 8am to 9am, an answer machine is available before this time. If we have not had contact from the parent/carer by 9.30 am, the Attendance Officer will make a call home and request information by telephone. If a student is signed off school by a Doctor due to illness, a copy of the certificate should be sent to school, and the Attendance Officer will update the system accordingly. This is the only exception for not ringing and updating the school of absence on a daily basis.

For the Sixth Form, parent/carers or students are asked to contact the school for any absence by 9.30 am. Where this does not occur, students, on their return, must pick up a red absence slip from the Sixth Form Administrator and write their reasons for their absence; the Sixth Form Administrator will then update the records. For planned absences e.g. medical appointments, students must fill out a Request for Absence Form prior to the absence and hand it in to obtain authorisation.

The Attendance Officer/ Sixth Form Administrator will inform the SLT Line Manager or Head Teacher if notes contain information indicating serious rather than routine reasons for absence.

If the Attendance Officer is unable to obtain contact from home, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The system will be updated accordingly once the parent/carer has contacted the school and where there are welfare concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed.

If a student's attendance is below 92% and the Attendance Officer is unable to obtain contact from home, the absence will be reported to the Head of House or a member of SLT. Depending on individual circumstances, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may be made aware and a home visit may be requested. For the Sixth Form, the Head of Sixth Form will be made aware.

Attendance is monitored closely by the Attendance Officer/Sixth Form Administrator, Form Tutors and Heads of House. A weekly percentage attendance report is produced. A letter will go home for students below 95% at the discretion of their Head of House (HoH)/Head of Sixth

Form (Ho6th), and students with attendance persistently below 92% will be referred to the EWO.

Sixth Form students who fall persistently below 90% will be placed on a “telephone home” list where daily telephone calls are made by the Sixth Form Administrator.

Parents/carers of students in Years 7 to 13 are able to check their child’s attendance on the Parent Gateway (Edulink).

Procedure for Unexplained Absence follow-up:

When the Unexplained Absence Report is produced, the Attendance Officer will usually e-mail the student, copying in their Form Tutor, to request a planner note, letter or Leave of Absence Form for the absence. If there is no response the Attendance Officer will e-mail a second time, this time copying in the HoH as well. If there is still no explanation for the absence, a letter will be sent home to parents/carers asking for the information to be supplied. If no update is then received, a second letter will be sent to parents/carers. This letter will also inform parents/carers if no update has been received by the Monday of the following week, the absence will be entered as “Unauthorised”.

Guidelines are that there should be no sessions unaccounted for and the code “N” (no reason yet provided for absence) is merely a “holding” code and should not be used as a permanent entry on the official register.

A list of Unauthorised Absences will be held by the Attendance Officer for tracking purposes. Any issues or concerns will be forwarded to the Head of Sixth Form, HoH and Form Tutors.

Lateness

Should a student arrive at school late, they must report to the Attendance Officer or School Office as soon as they arrive, to have their name entered into the late book and be issued with a pass to hand in to the lesson where they are meant to be. If a student is late and attempts to enter class without a pass, their teacher should send them to the office for a pass. If a student is continually late, they will be asked for an adequate explanation and if none is given, parents/carers will be consulted and further action taken. For the Sixth Form they must sign in with the Sixth Form Administrator.

Additionally, at DHSG we also operate electronic registration at the beginning of each lesson throughout the day.

The Education Welfare Service and School Attendance

The EWS is a part of Plymouth Local Authority (the LA). Its aim is to ensure ~~that~~ every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties ~~that~~ which prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure ~~that~~ their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

The (EWO) is responsible for liaison with the LA, School and Parents/Carers/Students on matters of attendance, including:

- transport
- free school meals
- outfit allowances
- grants
- child protection

and any welfare matters which may have an adverse effect on a young person's ability to assimilate the education being provided.

HoH should liaise with the appropriate member of SLT prior to contacting the EWO but may in an emergency do so immediately and inform the member of SLT afterwards. The number is 01752 307405.

It is essential the information held on parents/carers and students is accurate. Should there be a need for the school to contact parents/carers; this can then be efficiently carried out with limited delay. Whilst this information is stored confidentially, it should be noted that in line with the Data Protection Act, the school is not prevented from sharing any information with the police or social services (or other external agencies) where it is believed that a student is at risk of harm.

It is essential each member of staff ensures attendance is of high importance to all students.

Responsibilities for Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governing Body

- Ownership of the whole school attendance policy and procedures
- Monitor and set achievable attendance targets to ensure reduction of absence
- Provide support, guidance and challenge to staff in delivering their duties in regard to attendance.

Responsibilities for Attendance Officer

Daily

- To deal with any telephone calls regarding absences from 08.00 am and enter relevant information onto SIMs.
- To inform relevant parties (Form Tutor/HoH/DSL) if there are any areas of concern.
- To check all morning registers are completed by 09.30 am and send a 'Missing Register' notifications to staff who have not completed the task by this time.
- To inform the link SLT member where teachers are failing to meet their statutory duty in relation to registration.
- To run the Whole School report after Absence report and calls.
- To liaise with the DSL where a vulnerable student is absent.
- To advise the HoH and relevant SLT members, of students who register for P1 but not am registration.
- To check that all afternoon registers are completed by 142.45 pm and visit the classroom of any staff who have not completed the task by this time.

Responsibilities of the Sixth Form Administrator pertaining to attendance

- To inform Form Tutor, Ho6th if there are any areas of concern.
- To sign in students who are late and update the records accordingly.
- To liaise with Ho6/DSL if a vulnerable student is absent.

Weekly

- To ensure each Form Tutor is copied into emails to students regarding absence (see p5).
- To provide each HoH with a 'Percentage Attendance' report (Below 95%) every Tuesday and update the relevant spreadsheet.
- To provide each HoH with a 'Late' report every Tuesday and update relevant spreadsheet.

Responsibilities of the Sixth Form Administrator pertaining to attendance

- To ensure each KS5 tutor and Ho6 receives an unexplained absence report each Thursday during tutor time.
- To collate all sheets from the previous week, and to update the records accordingly

- To meet weekly with the HoH regarding attendance

Termly

- To provide SLT and HoH with a Percentage Attendance Disproportionality chart at the end of every term. The chart identifies those students and groups of students who are Persistent Absentees (>90%) and those achieving less than 95% attendance against the rest of the school.
- To update the 3 Three Year Trend report for disadvantaged groups.
- To provide SLT with a Behaviour Attendance and Emotional Wellbeing (BAE) Audit report for all year groups.

Responsibilities of Sixth Form Administrator pertaining to attendance

- To run a percentage attendance report to monitor attendance and to identify trends of absence
- To ensure that letters are sent home to parents/carers and meetings are set up when required
- To update the persistent absence list and update the “phone home” list

Responsibilities for the Administration Team within the Main Office

- To take telephone calls regarding absence until 08.00 am and enter details on SIMs or pass the details to the Attendance Officer
- Each Administrator with responsibility for a relevant year group should pass through to the Attendance Officer a list of any students with authorised absences
- To take telephone calls regarding any absence after 15.00 pm and enter details onto SIMs, or leave details for the Attendance Officer to update on the next working day.

Responsibilities for Heads of House (HoH)

- Monitor weekly list of students per year group with below 95% attendance.
- Contact parents/carers of students whose attendance drops below 92%.
- Meet with the Attendance Officer when necessary to discuss any issues.
- Liaise with Form Tutors regarding issues either as a result of discussion through Tutor Period or as and when necessary.
- Liaise with parents/carers when issues arise.
- Contact/make referrals to the EWO or other external agencies where appropriate (notifying appropriate member of SLT).
- To utilise and compare current reports to the Disproportionality Chart issued at the end of every term.
- Monitor the attendance of disadvantaged groups.

Responsibilities of Form Tutors

- To be punctual in taking registers during Registration Period and ensuring that information entered is accurate (if there is any doubt, please refer to the Attendance Officer). If Form Tutors have any information regarding a student’s absence, they are asked not to enter a code, but record a message within the ‘Comment Field’ which will flag an alert to the administration staff.
- To record ‘L’ on the register if a student arrives after 08.50 am, but before the register closes.
- To monitor and discuss any unexplained absences from the previous week during Tutor Period with individual students. The weekly report ‘Unexplained Absences’ will be sent from the Attendance Officer providing details of the sessions missed. The Form Tutor should check Planners and ensure information is current and updated regularly.
- To return the ‘Unexplained Absences’ report to the Attendance Officer and Sixth Form Administrator at the end of the Tutor period with notes/details of any updates.

- To ensure a communication link with the Attendance Officer, Sixth Form Administrator and HoH is regular where there are any issues of concern.
- To inform the DSL if patterns of lateness/absence raise welfare concerns.

Responsibilities of Teaching Staff

- To be punctual in taking registers at the start of each lesson and ensuring that information entered is accurate, (if there is any doubt, please refer to the Attendance Officer). If they do have any information regarding a student's absence, they should not enter a code, but record a message within the 'Comment Field' which will flag an alert to administration staff.
- If a Teacher is unable to access SIMs or they are unable to take their register, it is imperative that a paper register is produced (*record attendance on paper and pass to the Main Office*).

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- Ensure their child leaves for school on time every day.
- Provide a written explanation for their child's absences from school.
- Endeavour not to take their child out of school in term time.
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with their child's attendance.
- If no letter has been sent in advance, telephone the school on the first morning their child is absent.

Responsibilities of Students

- Arrive at 08.50–am for registration every morning and 14.35pm for registration every afternoon.
- Be on time for lessons.
- Make sure a note is sent from parents/carers to explain absences.
- If late, sign in at the main office/or Sixth Form Office.
- If they need to leave early, to sign out at the main office or Sixth Form office.
- Tell their Form Tutor, Ho6th or HoH if they are having any problems attending school.

Support Available

- Attendance Reports (to combat lesson truancy).
- Attendance interviews and regular reviews.
- Meetings with HoH, Head of Sixth Form, EWO and other external agencies to provide support for students and their parents/carers.
- Re-integration programme on the first morning back in school after long-term absence.
- Re-integration timetables where appropriate.
- Individualised curriculum where appropriate.
- EWO involvement including possible home visits.

Rewards

- Commendations.
- Certificates and letters home for individuals and form prizes for groups.
- Good attendance references to potential employers/colleges.

Sanctions

The school reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions to fulfil its obligations with respect to school attendance:-

- Form Tutor detention.
- Subject Department detention.
- House/SLT detention.
- EWO involvement and referral.

- Parenting Contracts.
- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions.

Children Missing from Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual and/or criminal exploitation and radicalisation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where students go missing on repeated occasions.

We follow the DfE legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination and will work closely with the (EWS).

Where a student has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps* have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Plymouth City Council's Children Missing Education (CME) Service.

The CME service can be contacted on 01752 307405 or by email to cme@plymouth.gov.uk

*Reasonable steps include:

- telephone calls to all known contacts
- letters home (including recorded delivery)
- contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- possible home visits where safe to do so
- enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the student/family
- all contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the student's file

Upon receipt of a referral from the school, the CME Service will then continue to attempt to track the student, for at least a further 10 school days, using access to additional contacts/services, e.g. Housing. If this also fails to establish the student's whereabouts, the school will be informed to remove the student from roll and place the student's name on the School to School database, entering XXXXXXXX in the box for destination. This will place the student on the list of Children Missing from Education.

Deletions from roll agreed with the CME Service will normally be backdated to the first day of absence.

If the CME Service is able to contact the student and their parents/carers, arrangements will be made with the school and family for a return to education, including a re-integration programme where necessary. If the student has registered at another school, we will delete their name from our roll and transfer the student's educational records to the new school in the normal way. Any child protection records will be transferred separately and securely for the attention of the DSL in the new school and a receipt secured.

Students leaving the school for known destinations outside the maintained sector in England and Wales will be updated to the School to School database using MMMMMMMM in the destination box. This includes private/independent schools, schools in other countries (including Scotland and Northern Ireland) and students moving into Home Education. The latter will be formally notified to the EWO Home Education Officer by the school as soon as written confirmation is received from the parents/carers. If no confirmation is received the above Missing Children procedures will apply.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Please authorise absence for: _____ of form _____ _____ of form _____			
<p>I request authorisation for my child/children to be absent from school due to:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Immediate family member's bereavement, crisis, serious illness or funeral <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding of immediate family member (please provide evidence) <input type="checkbox"/> Religious observance (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Service personnel about to go on deployment (please provide letter from the Commanding Officer) <input type="checkbox"/> To participate as a competitor at a sporting event / competition (please provide evidence from organising body) <input type="checkbox"/> Examinations (please provide evidence from organising body) <input type="checkbox"/> Medical appointments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)			
<p>Please attach a letter / evidence for absences of half a day or longer.* Schools are unable to authorise any request for absence relating to holidays in term time, unless under exceptional circumstances. If you feel your circumstances are exceptional, please complete this form with a detailed letter to the Head Teacher. <small>*Half a day is defined as being from morning registration until lunch time, or from lunch time until the end of the school day.</small></p>			
Time From:	To:	Date From:	To:
Name of Parent/Carer:		Address:	
I/We understand that the school is not obliged to authorise this request.			
Signature of Parent/Carer:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Absence Authorised		<input type="checkbox"/> Absence Not Authorised	
Signed by Head of House:			Date:
Percentage attendance: <i>(Office use only)</i>		Date received by office:	
REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME		RETURN TO PARENT(S)/CARER(S)	
Student name/s: _____ of form: _____ _____ of form: _____			
Time From:	To:	Date From:	To:
<input type="checkbox"/> Absence Authorised		<input type="checkbox"/> Absence Not Authorised	
Signed by Head of House:			Date:

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS / CARERS

DHSG is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to fully benefit from education, excellent attendance is crucial. As a school, we will do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students.

Schools may authorise absence during term time but approval is not automatic.

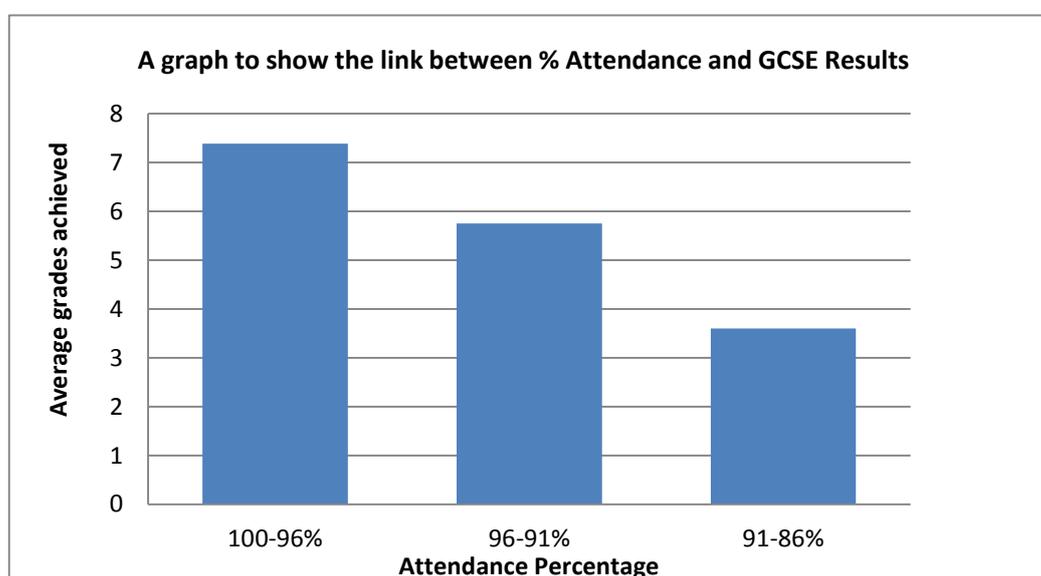
The Head Teacher will only grant leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher will determine the number of school days a student can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The duration of the absence and the date of return should be agreed by the School before making any arrangements.

National data for Secondary School attendance tells us that the benchmark for good attendance is 94.8% (Analysing School Performance (ASP) 2019). This is the standard for comparison that is used by OFSTED to make judgements and as such we will use this to set a threshold of 95% attendance when considering an application for leave of absence.

Following DfE guidance, if the school refuses a request for term time leave and the student is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

There is a strong connection between attendance and achievement at school. Absence is proven to have a significant negative impact upon a child's educational attainment. The graph below demonstrates this relationship clearly and uses data from the Year 11 DHSG cohorts.



Attendance over one school year (190 school days) – If a student had:

- 98% attendance = less than 4 days absent from school
- 95% attendance = less than 10 days absent from school
- 90% attendance = 4 weeks absent from school
- 85% attendance = 5½ weeks absent from school
- 80% attendance = 7½ weeks absent from school