

Values and Principles

Darton High School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for all pupils to realise their true potential. Parents and guardians are required by law to ensure that children receive full-time education.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Darton High School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Aims

1. To improve the overall percentage of pupils at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions which is consistent and fair with rewards for good attendance enjoying the highest priority.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Taking the Register

Pupils of compulsory school age must have their attendance registered twice daily. It is the practice of this school to register ALL pupils by SIM's, this is done during form period (Period1) and the first lesson of the afternoon session (Period 5), some students may also receive a present mark if attending the twilight sessions, this also counts as a school session and can be reclaimed towards a students school attendance through the re-claiming lost learning scheme.

In addition all teaching staff will check that the pupils who should attend each lesson do so, any missing students will be logged on SIMs for Form Tutors and Heads of Year to follow up.

The register must record whether the pupil is present, absent, excluded or attending an approved educational activity.

An 'approved educational activity' is defined as:

1. One taking place off the school premises
2. Approved by a person authorised by the governing body or the Head
3. Supervised by a person approved by the governing body or Head
4. Of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, or for a place in Further Education
5. Link courses where pupils attend an FE college for part of their time, or franchised pupils receiving part of their education off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under school supervision (eg sick children being taught at home), or attending approved sporting activity.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

When a pupil of compulsory school age is absent it must be marked as an 'authorised' or 'unauthorised' absence. This is completed by the Attendance officer in school.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason; illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which **the school** does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

This includes:

- Keeping a student off school for trivial reasons such as shopping, family visits, house minding, babysitting
- External and Internal Truancy

If you do not contact us to explain an absence then we will contact you on the first day of absence for a reason, if contact cannot be made a letter requiring your response will be posted.

Lateness

Punctuality is also of great important both to ensure they receive a full education and to teach the student the importance of being on time for things.

If a student arrives more than 30 minutes after the official start of the school day (8.50am) they are marked as absent for that session and school will require a note from home to confirm and explain the absence.

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to make sure that children are present promptly. Lateness is recorded and regular lateness will be made up by a school detention.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Approve the policy and any proposed changes
- Receive reports from the Head or appropriate member of the Senior Team
- Review the working of the policy in the light of the Senior Leadership Teams report
- Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school, and is known by the parents.

The Head and Senior Staff will:

- Set attendance targets as part of the development plan and target-setting process
- Monitor progress
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school
- Determine whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made
- Notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence
- Initiate with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance
- Liaise with the LEA over persistent absentees
- Liaise with the LEA and police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school
- Make reports with statistics to the governing body.

The School will:

- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately
- Ensure that pupils bring absence notes
- Follow up cases of unaccounted absence or unacceptable notes
- Make prompt calls to parents

Pupils are required to:

- Attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- If possible inform the school of their absence on the first day of non-attendance
- Bring an explanatory note on the day of return to school
- Discuss with the tutor any planned absences well in advance
- Make any request for leave of absence on the school's official forms.

Holidays

Any absence from school is detrimental to your child's education. Work copied up is not the same as work undertaken in class with access to teacher instruction and advice.

Prolonged or repeated absences from school will undoubtedly affect your child's attainment.

The Headteacher is empowered to grant discretionary leave of absence from school including for **family holidays for up to 10 days in any one school year**. Leave of absence will not be considered in the following periods:

- Between the beginning of September and the October half term to allow for settling in the new school year.
- Between February and May half terms for pupils in Years 9 and 11.
- Where a pupil has internal examinations or assessments, including coursework within a month of the requested leave of absence.
- If the pupil's attendance would fall below 92% as a result of the granted leave.

Leave of absence in these periods may be granted in exceptional circumstances. Finally, please note that leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.

Absence that is not authorised by the Headteacher is recorded as unauthorised. All unauthorised absence is monitored and may lead to the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer.

Rewards

Darton High School:

- Recognises that regular attendance is most important and is a vital part of positive behaviour.
- Believes praise is most important and good attendance and punctuality need to be celebrated.
- Has a system to recognise very good attendance by annual certificates, and financial and voucher type rewards.
- Will develop policies through its Teaching and Learning (especially in Personal and Social Education) to promote the values and strengths consistent in regular attendance.

Pupil Support: Actions to Overcome Attendance Problems

Some pupils do need active encouragement to attend regularly. All problems can be tackled if all sides are honest with each other. It is never justified to cover up any absence by making excuses for absence. Parents and pupils themselves can seek help when needed.

We can offer:

- Meetings with parents to discuss strategies at school and at home to encourage regular attendance.
- Considering ways in school to engage the pupil
- Using learning mentors
- Using methods to discourage absence (ie report systems, letters home)
- Extra help with work missed
- In-school counselling with teachers or designated support staff
- Establishing a pastoral support programme for pupils with long-term disaffection (see DfES Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Circular 10/99)
- Offer peer and "Buddies" support in school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school works in partnership with all local agencies and welcomes their support and involvement. In particular the Education Welfare Service has a distinctive role to play in promoting and helping to develop good attendance.

This policy will be supported by analysing all relevant data regularly, and publishing the information as part of the school's reporting and information fed to parents via newsletters etc.

Attendance Procedure for Darton High

1. If a student's attendance drops below 90% form tutors are expected to carry out a 4 week monitoring programme with the student. Please contact parents to inform them of the action the school is taking.
 - 1.1. The 90% intervention starts after 1st November of that academic year; this allows the % to be based on sufficient data.
 - 1.2. If in the professional opinion of the teacher there is cause for concern before this date the programme can be started, this could include significant absence, previous history of poor attendance, significant change in personal circumstances.
 - 1.3. If the student has had a holiday or one significant absence, please use professional discretion when deciding/issuing.
2. After the completion of the 4 week programme there are 4 possible outcomes:
 - 2.1. The student's attendance has increased but is still below 90% - In this case continue to issue 4 week programmes.
 - 2.2. The student's attendance has increased above the 90% mark – In this case intervention ceases
 - 2.3. The student's attendance has failed to increase, stayed about the same or isn't increasing at a rate which will see them achieve 90% in the near future – In this case refer to Head of Year (see point 3).
3. Head of Year intervention, call home to parents to invite them into a meeting where parental contract is signed. Head of year to action a 4 week programme; this will have 4 possible outcomes.
 - 3.1. The student's attendance has increased but is still below 90% - In this case continue to issue 4 week programmes.
 - 3.2. The student's attendance has increased above the 90% mark – In this case intervention ceases
 - 3.3. The student's attendance has failed to increase, and has dropped below 80%– In this case refer to Education Welfare Officer (see point 4), and in cases of years 9, 10 + 11 a separate referral to Connexions is required.
4. Education Welfare Officer Intervention, EWO referral to be completed by Head of Year. Continued 4 week programme of intervention with additional support from EWO including:
 - 4.1. Home visits
 - 4.2. Warning letters
 - 4.3. Attendance Panel
 - 4.4. Final warning letter
 - 4.5. Court Case

5. At the point that a student's attendance increases from below 80% to 80% or above the EWO ceases involvement and the PSA becomes involved in continuing to support the student's increase in attendance.
 - 5.1. Below 80% - EWO monitoring/involvement
 - 5.2. 80% - 85% - PSA monitoring/involvement
 - 5.3. 85% - 90% - Head of Year monitoring/involvement
 - 5.4. 90% or above - Form Tutor monitoring/involvement

6. Praise and Rewards for attendance
 - 6.1. When moving from below 80% to 80% or above a letter informing parents of the improvement and its significance is sent home. This also introduces the PSA and their role in the process.
 - 6.2. When increasing from below 85% to 85% or above a letter informing parents of the improvement and its significance is sent home. This also officially registers the end of the PSA involvement and the role the Head of Year has to play.
 - 6.3. When increasing from below 90% to 90% or above a letter informing parents of the improvement and its significance is sent home. This also officially registers the end of the Head of Year involvement and the role the Form Tutor has to play.
 - 6.4. For every ½ term a student achieves 100% attendance they receive an award, the awards are as follows.
 - 1st Award – 100% attendance in a term postcard sent in post
 - 2nd Award - Bronze Attendance Award, signifying 2 ½ term periods where attendance was 100%
 - 3rd Award - Silver Attendance Award, signifying 3 ½ term periods where attendance was 100%
 - 4th Award - Gold Attendance Award, signifying 4 ½ term periods where attendance was 100%
 - 5th Award - Platinum Attendance Award, signifying 5 ½ term periods where attendance was 100%
 - 6th Award – Ultimate Attendance Award, signifying a full year where attendance has remained at 100%
 - 6.5. Any student with an attendance of 99.8% or above on the penultimate Friday of term is invited to a BBQ the following week during the afternoon, and on a school trip during the 1st week back.