

# Attendance information

September 2022



## 1. Aim

The aim of *Diamond Families* attendance policy is to enable us to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at our centre is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason Diamond Families is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

Diamond families takes a whole service approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending our provision as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This document is supported by our policies on **safeguarding**, **bullying**, **behaviour** and **inclusive learning**.

## 2. Legal framework

**The Education Act 1996 states that:**

**The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —**

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**A person begins to be of compulsory school age —**

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day,
- and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

**A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —**

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

*Diamond Families* is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this document accordingly.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Trustees**

As part of our approach to maintaining high attendance, the Trustees will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review with the school's attendance rules and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and children to implement the rules effectively
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year
- take time at Trustee meetings to regularly review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- ensure that the provision is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff

- ensure that senior leaders make the necessary referrals to the local authority and other relevant agencies in individual cases of non-attendance
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future

## leadership team

As part of our approach to maintaining high attendance, the Service leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the provisions teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the centres attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the governing body *each term* and the lead governor for attendance *half-termly* on attendance records, data and provision
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings
- notify the LA and provide all necessary information when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register or when a child's name is added to the admission register other than *at the usual point of transition. (e.g. entering reception / Year 7 / Year 12).*

## staff

As part of our approach to maintaining high attendance, the centres teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the provisions teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the centres attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

## Parents and carers

As  
request that parents:

part of our approach to maintaining high attendance, we

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at the provision
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- ensure that their children arrive on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- follow the set procedure for reporting the absence of their child (**see section 4**), and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- use our service as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with us so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep us informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the headteacher (**see section 4.5**)
- inform us in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren) along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live.
- *sign a home=school agreement.*

## Pupils

As part of our approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the attendance rules, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through our staff, parents and the timetable
- speak to their form tutor 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. Lesson times will be made clear through their timetable
- bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- follow the correct set procedure if they arrive late (**see section 4.8**). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the staff to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of an evacuation
- *sign a home=school agreement. [see the blue box note above]*

## 4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to us. Parents cannot authorise absences.



Staff should make it clear on the register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences, they should follow our safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent without prior permission, parents should inform the us by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. *For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child.* Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

#### **4.1 Illness**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert us on *the first day/each day* of absence. When the child returns, they should bring a note from their parent explaining the absence – this is for our records.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide us with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper. If these are not provided on request it may result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

#### **4.2 Medical or dental appointments**

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend their provision for as much of that day as possible.

#### **4.3 Authorised absences**

There may be some exceptional instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

#### **4.4 Exclusion**

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. *The students key worker will arrange for work to be sent home.*

#### **4.5 Family holidays and extended leave**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. *Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the headteacher 4 weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.*

*Retrospective applications will not be considered, and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved, and the length of absence approved.*

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return Parents should contact us immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised *and parents may be subject to further action by the school or prosecution by the local authority.*

#### **4.6 Religious observance**

*Diamond families* recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends and will allow authorised absence for these times.



Parents will be aware of these dates and should give us

written notification in advance.

#### **4.7/4.8 Late arrival**

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the day and again in the afternoon. In the morning **registration begins at 10:00am.**

Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **The morning registration period ends at 10:15am.**

Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

If a parent or carer fails to notify us of absence before 10:00 am attempts to contact the parent / carer will be made. If there is no response the students local authority key worker will be informed and if a social worker is involved with the family they will be notified also.

#### **Note:**

We also take the attendance register during the afternoon of each school day. If a pupil is not present at the time that the afternoon registration takes place they will be marked absent. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action being taken against the pupil and/or criminal action being taken against the parents.

## **5. action: following up absences**

C registers are passed to the office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, we will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the *students key worker* will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and support systems that could help.

Parents/carers will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

Key workers will chase pupils for written explanation from their parents/carers for their absence upon the pupil's return from being away. *This is for our records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.*

Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, we will support that child when they return to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

Where a child has been continuously absent for a period of 20 school days or more, and where the absence was unauthorised and both the provision and LA have been unable to establish the whereabouts of the child after jointly making reasonable enquiries, the provision may remove the child from the school roll. The school will notify the local authority when such action is taken.



Persistent absenteeism or attendance percentage that falls below 90% will be responded to with an internal s attendance letter. Attendance below 84% will require the parents/ carer and student to attend an attendance clinic and to draw up an action plan to improve attendance. Attendance that falls below 80% will be referred to education welfare within the local authority.

Schools may take action against any pupils who are discovered to be persistently truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help. We may take further action against the parents, including [the issuing of fixed penalty notices and/or] referral to the local authority to begin criminal proceedings against the parents.