

Attendance Policy

Danesgate Community



STRIVE THRIVE ACHIEVE

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Statement of Intent

At Danesgate Community we believe that to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential.

Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and
 - b) to any special educational needs he/she may have
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

Education Act 1996

Equality Act 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

- DfE ‘School attendance’
- DfE ‘Children missing education’
- DfE ‘Keeping children safe in education’

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing Education Guidance
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

2. Definitions

2.1. Danesgate Community defines “absence” as either:

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

2.2. Danesgate Community defines an “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for illness for which Danesgate Community has granted leave (a maximum of 3 consecutive days can be authorised – if the absence is for a longer period then school may request a doctor’s note or medical evidence, such as a photograph of medication).
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which Danesgate Community has granted leave (appointment letters/a copy of the text/email confirming the appointment are required to authorise the absence).
- Religious or cultural observances for which Danesgate Community has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency (at school’s discretion).

2.3. Danesgate Community defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Prolonged sickness absence without medical evidence to support the length of absence.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Truancy or leaving school for no reason or without permission during the day.

2.4. Danesgate Community defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason (attendance below 90%).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The Governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of Danesgate Community.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in Danesgate Community’s Complaints Procedures Policy.

- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a 'Children Missing Education Guidance' in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

3.2. The Pastoral Care Manager is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of Danesgate Community and distributing these to parents.

3.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:

- Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

3.4. The Class Lead will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session (lunch time). All absence will be followed up on.

3.5. Danesgate Community will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence. Taking in to account individual needs and timetable changes where appropriate.

3.6. Danesgate Community will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note from a medical professional clearly stating that mainstream education is not a suitable provision.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and Danesgate Community does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

3.7. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their children during term-time.

3.8. Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure their children attend school every day and on time.

3.9. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout Danesgate Community year.

3.10. All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to school and to lessons.

4. Training of staff

4.1. We recognise that early intervention can prevent bad attendance. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their inductions and annual refresher training.

4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.

4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

4.4. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupils expectations

5.1. Pupils will be expected to attend school every day.

5.2. Danesgate Community expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually and fully equipped.

6. Absence procedures

6.1. Parents are required to contact Danesgate Community before 9.00am on every day of absence.

6.2. A telephone call, text message or email will be made / sent to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence on every day that they do not attend school.

6.3. Danesgate Community will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto Danesgate Community census system.

6.4. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to Danesgate Community Attendance Officer and/or the Pastoral Team as appropriate.

6.5. Danesgate Community will inform the LA, on a regular basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

6.6. Where a pupil has not been in school for more than 2 days and we have not had an explanation for the absence, staff will conduct a home visit.

7. Contact information

7.1. Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.

7.2. Parents are responsible for updating Danesgate Community if the details change.

7.3. Parents must provide Danesgate Community with more than one emergency contact number.

8. Attendance register

8.1. The Class Lead will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

8.2. Danesgate Community will use the national attendance codes to enable Danesgate Community to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

/ = Present in the morning

\ = Present in the afternoon

L = Late arrival before the register has closed

C = Authorised absence

E = Excluded but no alternative provision made

H = Authorised holiday

I = Illness

M = Medical or dental appointments

R = Religious observance

B = Off-site educational activity

G = Unauthorised holiday

O = Unauthorised absence

U = Arrived after registration closed

N = Reason not yet provided

X = Not required to be in school

S = Study leave

T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

W = Work experience

V = Educational visit or trip

P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity

J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

Y = Exceptional circumstances

Z = Pupil not on admission register

= Planned whole or partial school closure

The Class Lead will make a clear and concise note on to Integris to explain any registration mark other than a present (/) mark.

8.3. When Danesgate Community has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#', or equivalent, will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because Danesgate Community has set different term dates for different years, for example, induction days.

On the rare occasion that it becomes necessary for the safety of pupils to close a class. For example, due to staff absences, parents will be consulted prior to class closure to ensure the needs of their children are being met. This will be marked with a code '#'.

8.4. During the ongoing Covid pandemic, school will follow any additional guidance regarding the coding and monitoring of absence, in line with the most up to date Department for Education Guidance.

9. Attendance Officer

9.1. If a pupil is persistently absent, pupils will be referred to Danesgate Community Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Team who will attempt to resolve the situation and remove any barriers to attending school / addressing any concerns.

9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, Danesgate Community will refer to the LA Attendance Officer who has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

10. Lateness

10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance. However, at Danesgate we also understand that at times pupils may be late due to transport issues.

10.2. Danesgate Community's Day starts at 9.00am; pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

10.3. For morning registers, these will be marked by 9.20am; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Staff must write the time of arrival on to notes if pupils are late along with any reason for lateness.

10.4. For afternoon registers, these will be marked by 12.30pm; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Staff must write the time of arrival on to notes if pupils are late along with any reason for lateness.

10.5. If a student arrives late at school, they must sign in at Reception.

10.6. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark (Code U). Morning registers will close at 9.50am and afternoon registers will close at 12.50pm. Staff must write the time of arrival on to notes.

11. Truancy

11.1. Truancy means any absence of one or more days from school (part day or all day), during which Danesgate Community has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

11.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

11.3. Any pupil with permission to leave Danesgate Community during the day must sign out at Reception and sign back in again on their return.

11.4. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting.

11.5. If truancy is suspected, the Pastoral Team / Attendance Officer will contact the child's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

11.6. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a phone call will be made to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy.
- If any further truancy occurs, then Danesgate Community will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

12. Missing children

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during Danesgate Community day:

The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Pastoral Team immediately. The Pastoral Team will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.

- Pastoral members of staff will conduct a thorough search of Danesgate Community premises.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Danesgate Community grounds
- If the pupil has not been found after 15 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- Danesgate Community will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contacts provided.

- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the list has been exhausted, then the police will be contacted.

12.4. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a CYPIC, or has SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

12.5. When the pupil has been located, a designated member of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

12.6. The Pastoral Team will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises.

12.7. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

12.8. The Pastoral Team will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

12.9. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behavioural Policy.

12.10. Following an incident of this nature policies and procedures will be reviewed.

13. Term-time leave

13.1. At Danesgate our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe Danesgate Community holidays as prescribed.

13.2. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness.

13.3. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

13.5. If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions such as a penalty notice.

14. Religious observances

14.1. Danesgate Community will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.

14.2. Parents must inform Danesgate Community at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

15. Appointments

15.1. As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, parents should contact the Class Lead and give them the information, along with a copy of the appointment letter/card.

15.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave / return during Danesgate Community day, the pupil must sign out of school at Reception and sign back in again on their return.

15.4. Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

16. Young carers

16.1. Danesgate Community understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at Danesgate Community.

16.2. Danesgate Community takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

17. Exceptional circumstances

17.1. When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register.

17.2. Exceptional circumstances would include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

17.3. The use of the 'Y' code is collected in Danesgate Community census for statistical purposes.

18. Rewarding good attendance

18.1. Danesgate acknowledges outstanding attendance and individual attendance improvements in some of the following ways:

- Certificates
- Form group prizes
- Individual prizes
- Texts/calls/emails home
- Positive stay behinds

19. Monitoring and review

19.1. At Danesgate Community we monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

19.2. Danesgate Community's attendance target is 90 percent each year which we appreciate is a high expectation for a specialist provision.

19.3. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher and the Pastoral Care Manager.

19.4. Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

- The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025.