

THOMAS HARDYE SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



Adopted By: Local Governing Body

Signed: Chair of Governors – A.Moore

A.N. Moore

Date: 7.7.21

Review Date: 6.7.24

ATTENDANCE POLICY

THOMAS HARDYE SCHOOL

Thomas Hardy School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or careers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the student, where all parties value education to enable success in later life.

The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

We will ensure that our students are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

Leave of absence in term time

It is school policy, in line with statutory guidance in the Education (Pupil Registration) England amendment Regulations 2013, that leave of absence during term time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a student's potential achievement. If the absence is for exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

School Procedures

Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

Registers

The registers are taken by tutors in the morning at 8.55 am and in the afternoon at 1.20 pm. These are taken electronically and recorded on SIMS. When tutors are absent the cover supervisor will ask other staff members to take the register.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55 am.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close unless there is an acceptable explanation. **Students arriving after this time will sign in at the main office**, their names and tutor group will be recorded along with the reason for being late. Parents will be informed of their lateness via a Groupcall.

Late detentions will be run by the College Leaders for students who have three late marks for no appropriate reason.

First Day Absence

Parents are asked to call on each day of absence, unless signed off for a specific period by a doctor.

The Attendance Manager will send a text to the parent/carer, asking for a reason for absence on each day of any absence that has not been reported.

All information is collated by the Attendance Manager.

The Attendance Manager will continue to make contact with parents if no information is forthcoming.

Ten Days Absence

After ten consecutive days of absence without explanation the Local Authority will be notified. The attendance manager will complete a Child Missing Education form on Nexus. The Local Authority locality team will also be informed. The report will contain details of attempts made to contact parents/guardians and any action taken.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the student, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

Within the school it is the responsibility of the Attendance Manager to be aware of and bring attention to College Leaders, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible by:

- a) Letter sent home expressing concern re absence. Appendix A (letter 1) Informing of 4 weeks attendance monitoring
- b) If there is no improvement a meeting will be held in the school with parents, student, College Leader, Guidance Leader, Attendance Manager and Attendance Officer from the Local Authority to discuss issues and concerns. Appendix B (letter 2)
- c) If after a further 4 week monitoring process there is no improvement a referral will be made to the DASP Attendance Panel.
- d) Meeting of the DASP Attendance Panel to include the Attendance Manager and a representative of the Thomas Hardy School if applicable. Appendix C (letter 3)
- e) If applicable an Improvement letter, Appendix D, will be sent.

Persistent Absence [PA]

All students whose attendance level falls below - 85% will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set by the appropriate College Leader

The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the student's attendance. If a student's attendance drops below 85% then medical evidence will be required in order to authorise the absence, eg appointment card. If a student is persistently absent due to ill health the school may refer to the school medical officer.

Welcome Back

Where students have a prolonged absence from school the form tutor will help the student to catch up on missed work and bring them up to date on any information that has been passed to the other student.

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

If a student is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered with, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (ie pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorized absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Record preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years.

Register Security

Registers or attendance marking sheets if used must be safely stored. All teachers use SIMS to mark registers.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. The system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established within each College and the College Leaders will be responsible for overseeing this. The school will make use of the attendance data available on the "Analyse School Performance (ASP)" system, when setting its target. Targets will relate to national averages.

Our school's targets is:

Attendance rate of 95% or above

Any pupil with attendance below 85% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences. The DfE has indicated that the level of absence that defines a child as being classed as PA may be reduced in future years.

APPENDICES

1. THE LAW

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

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 needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping

The legal requirements are found in:
The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Attendance Targets

The legal requirements are found in:
The Education (School Attendance Targets)(England) Regulations 2007

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.

2. **ATTENDANCE ADMINISTRATION**

Daily

Morning Procedure:

1. Clear all messages from answer phone.
2. Check e-mails for information from parents/tutors/guidance leaders and E4e – re attendance/absence.
3. Check SIMS homepage for registers missing, send a SIMS message and email tutor requesting they complete the register as soon as possible.
4. Put correct CODES on Registers. Check Priority list.
5. Fetch the 'Lates' signing in sheet
6. Check EVOLVE for any trips
7. Amend CODES on Registers.
8. Run 'Chose Code' Report, to list the students who are marked as N = absent with no reason or O – Absent.
9. Check Lesson Monitor for students marked N or O for AM registration and Lesson 1, mark accordingly.
10. Send a GroupCall text home – asking for reason for absence.
11. Parents reply with info:
 - a. Amend marks
 - b. Locate the student to verify present or absent
 - c. Report if the student is truanting to College Leader/Guidance Leader
12. Check 10 minutes into the lesson where possible for all years groups, query code 'N' and check whereabouts of that student. Groupcall home if necessary.
13. Keep parents informed, if necessary inform Early Intervention of Social Services
14. Liaise with College Leaders, Guidance Leaders and E4E office as necessary.

Afternoon Procedure:

1. Check on Registers – run a report to check on students as above, if NOT – just check up on the Priority list.
2. Check on signing in sheet from front reception
3. Update marks accordingly.
4. Groupcall home where PM registration and Lesson 4 are coded N or O for a student
5. Report any unauthorised absences/truants to College Team (Intervention Leader and Guidance Leader) and Parents.
6. Process any absence notes, amend SIMS.
7. Process Leave of Absence forms, amend SIMS.

Supporting Administration

Weekly:

1. Send unexplained absence letters home
2. Traffic Light system updated – Green = above 95% Amber = above 85%
Red = below 85%
3. Meeting with College Leaders
4. Meeting with Locality Team - Referrals to Early Intervention Team (as and when needed)

Monthly:

1. Send Appendix A (letter 1) informing of attendance below 95% and monitoring period. Evidence needed of all medical appointments, for future authorisation.
2. Send Appendix B (letter 2) invitation to meeting in school following lack of improvement since Appendix A.
3. Refer to DASP Attendance Panel. Appendix C letter sent from DASP if necessary.
4. Improvement letters sent out Appendix D

Complete Child Missing Education form on Nexus as required



Dorchester Area Schools Partnership
c/o The Thomas Hardy School
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 2ET

APPENDIX A (letter 1)

01305 756809
office@dasp.org.uk

Date

Parent's Name
Parent's Address

Dear Parent's Name

Re: Attendance Concerns, child's name - DOB: child's date of birth

At the beginning of the school year you received a letter informing you about the importance of regular school attendance and our aim to ensure good attendance for all students.

Your child has been identified as having an attendance level below 95% which means their attendance will be closely monitored as part of our Attendance Process. I have enclosed a registration certificate for you to look at.

You will appreciate that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is receiving an education. Dorset County Council (DCC) advises us to inform you that parents/carers may be liable to prosecution under (s) 444 Education Act 1996 if they fail to ensure that a child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school at which the child is registered.

Over the next four weeks attendance must improve and be over 95%, otherwise we will ask you to attend a meeting in school to discuss this matter. If attendance continues to be below 95% following this meeting you could receive a letter informing you of an Attendance panel. This panel may recommend further action such as a penalty notice, parental order, further monitoring or seeking prosecution through the magistrates court.

There are many reasons why students may have poor attendance. If there are specific circumstances that have contributed to [redacted]'s poor attendance that you feel we haven't considered, please contact Miss N Miles Attendance Manager. The school will consider seriously all notes/information explaining absences before deciding whether or not to authorise the absence.

PLEASE NOTE: During this four week period, any sickness absences should be supported with evidence such as a GP's appointment card or prescription slip, or hospital letter.

We hope this will not be necessary and that, instead, we see a significant improvement in school attendance. It is only through excellent attendance that [redacted] will achieve all that he/she is capable of achieving, and have the best opportunity for a rewarding and prosperous adult life.

Yours sincerely

Yours sincerely

N Ruthford
Thomas Hardy School

Melanie Pallister
Chair, Dorchester Area Schools Partnership



Dorchester Area Schools Partnership
c/o The Thomas Hardy School
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 2ET

APPENDIX B (letter 2)

01305 756809
office@dasp.org.uk

Date

Parent's Name
Parent's Address

Dear Parent's Name

Re: Attendance Concerns, child's name – DOB: child's date of birth

Following our letter to you earlier this academic year regarding _____'s attendance we regret to inform you that attendance has not improved to the required level and is currently at ____%.

It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure their child attends school. You also have a responsibility to contact the school each day should your child be unable to attend for any reason.

You are therefore invited to attend an Attendance Meeting at the school on **date** at **time** . You are welcome to bring a friend/colleague to support you.

Present at the meeting will be the College Leader, Guidance Leader, Attendance Manager and Attendance Support Officer from the Local Authority. It is important you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to _____'s non-attendance can be discussed.

As explained in earlier letters this meeting is an opportunity for the school, family, and other agencies to meet together to discuss why a child has such high absence rates and to hopefully come up with solutions to any problems.

Please telephone to confirm receipt of this letter, and your intention to attend the meeting by contacting Miss N Miles on 01305 266064.

Yours sincerely

N Rutherford
Headteacher
O/Admin/Attendance/Letter 2 Formal Invite



Dorchester Area Schools Partnership
c/o The Thomas Hardy School
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 2ET

01305 756809
office@dasp.org.uk

Parent's Name
Parent's Address

APPENDIX C (letter 3)

Date

Dear Parent's Name

Re: Attendance Concerns, child's name – DOB: child's date of birth

Following our letter to you earlier this academic year regarding [redacted]'s attendance we regret to inform you that attendance has not improved to the required level and is currently at [redacted]%.

It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure their child attends school. You also have a responsibility to contact the school each day should your child be unable to attend for any reason.

You are therefore invited to attend an Attendance Panel on **date** at **time** at **venue**. You are welcome to bring a friend/colleague to support you.

Present at the meeting will be a representative from the school, a Schools Social Worker and a County Solicitor. It is important you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to [redacted]'s non-attendance can be discussed.

As explained in earlier letters this meeting is an opportunity for the school, family, other agencies and the Solicitor from Dorset County Council Legal and Democratic Services Department to meet together to discuss why a child has such high absence rates and to hopefully come up with solutions to any problems.

The panel can recommend several outcomes including a further six week period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance, issuing a £60 Penalty Notice, a parenting order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or custody.

Please telephone to confirm receipt of this letter, and your intention to attend the meeting by contacting Karen Weir on 01305 756809.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Pallister
Chair, Dorchester Area Schools Partnership



Dorchester Area Schools Partnership
c/o The Thomas Hardy School
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 2ET

APPENDIX D (letter 4)

01305 756809
office@dasp.org.uk

Date

Parent's Name
Parent's Address

Dear Parent's Name

Re: child's name – DOB: child's date of birth – Attendance Improvement

Following the Attendance Panel on xxx we are pleased to note that _____'s attendance has improved significantly/slightly and is currently __%.

If _____'s attendance continues to improve, you will not need to attend future Attendance Panels. We will continue to closely monitor _____'s attendance with a view to re-instating the attendance process should it be necessary.

The Thomas Hardy School together with the rest of the Dorchester Area Schools' Partnership's aim is to work together, with the support and co-operation of parents and carers, to give all children the opportunity to benefit from their time as students at our schools and for them to be happy and successful. There are many reasons why students may have poor attendance. If, in the future, there are specific circumstances that may contribute to poor attendance that you would like to discuss please do not hesitate to contact your child's school. It is much better to resolve potential problems before they become an issue.

We thank you for your support with this process to date, and look forward to your continued support in the future.

Yours sincerely

N Rutherford
Headteacher



Dorchester Area Schools Partnership
c/o The Thomas Hardy School
Queens Avenue
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 2ET
September 2016

Information for all parents and carers on the importance of attendance and the Attendance Process

Dear Parent/Guardian

The schools within the Dorchester area regularly work together through the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership (DASP). Members of the partnership are committed to ensuring the best for all our learners and work together to support children and families. All schools are working very hard to promote good attendance and have common systems in place to work with families when attendance drops below an acceptable level. The Dorchester Area Schools Partnership support schools to deal with situations when a child's attendance fails to improve and continues to be below acceptable levels.

You will be aware of the importance of good school attendance in improving a young person's chance of success in life and in establishing positive attitudes to lifelong learning. There is clear evidence of the link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of pupils who miss between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of school, only 35 per cent achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and Maths, but 73 per cent of pupils who attend 95 per cent of school will achieve this. *(DfE June 2012)*

If a child has an attendance level of below 90 % this means they will have missed an average of one day a fortnight in school. Over a school year this will represent four weeks of absence. If this level of absence were maintained for a five year period it would mean half a school year would have been missed.

Across DASP, if a school is concerned about a child's attendance they will talk to the parents and write to them to explain why. They will then monitor attendance expecting to see an improvement. If no improvement is made, the family will be invited to attend an Attendance Panel.

Here at Thomas Hardy School we are determined to ensure that all our students have the opportunity to achieve success and have an excellent record attendance. All students' attendance is monitored. Where there is cause for concern you will be contacted and attendance closely monitored for the next four weeks. If attendance has not improved sufficiently - usually at least 95% you will be invited to an attendance panel.

The panel is an opportunity for the school, family, other agencies and a solicitor from Dorset County Council Legal and Democratic Services Department to meet together to discuss why a child has such high absence rates and to hopefully come up with solutions to any problems.

The panel can recommend several outcomes including a further six week period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance, issuing a £60 Penalty Notice, a parenting order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or custody.

The attendance process is designed to identify poor attendees quickly and address the issues that are affecting their attendance. When attendance improves monitoring will continue and if it falls the attendance process will be resumed.

All schools hope that the Attendance Panel will not be needed and that all pupils will have a good record of attendance. Thomas Hardy School and the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership's aim is to work together to give your child the opportunity to benefit from their time at school and for them to be happy and successful.

Yours sincerely

N Rutherford
Thomas Hardy School

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'MPallister'.

Melanie Pallister
Chair, Dorchester Area Schools Partnership



Information for Parents: DASP Attendance Statement

It is essential that children and young people form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that good attendance is maintained throughout their school career. The schools in the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership are committed to working together to ensure that there is a consistent approach to school attendance. It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

Schools within the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership have agreed the following:

- No Leave of Absence will be granted during term time, except in exceptional circumstances.
- The schools in the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership will monitor the attendance of our pupils and work closely with the Locality Early Intervention Teams to support children and young people whose attendance levels are causing concern.
- Whilst we understand that children do become ill on occasions, children who lose a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning. Schools have the right to request evidence of illness and will do so if a child builds up considerable absence through illness over a period of time. If a child's health continues to affect their education, schools are obliged to make a referral to the School Medical Officer to ensure that all that can be done is being done.
- If a child is ill it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that they inform the school. DASP schools all operate a targeted "First Day Call" system, which means they will contact you to ask why your child is not in school and when they are expected to return.
- It is important that pupils are in school on time. Good punctuality is not only important in obtaining maximum benefit from education, it is also a key skill for adult life. Lateness is monitored by schools in the DASP Partnership and contributes to absence rates.

Children only get one chance at school and your child's chances of a successful future may be affected by not attending school or college regularly

Amendments

Amended July 2016:

References to Attendance Administrator changed to Attendance Manager

Changes to Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Termly and Yearly processes

New Appendices A-D (letters 1-4)

Inclusion of DASP Attendance Introduction Letter and Information Sheet

Amended September 2016

Monitoring period changed to four weeks (APPENDIX A, Letter 1)

Consequences updated to include custody (APPENDIX B, Letter 2)

Amended July 2021

Ten-day absence sections

Remove 1.50pm registration on Wednesday

Register security

Remove attendance rewards

Remove termly and yearly

New Headteacher's name

To include completion of Child Missing Education Form

