



THE
DE LA SALLE
ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

Aims

The De La Salle Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all students. On the basis of equal opportunities, we will take measures to encourage regular and punctual attendance at the academy, and in all lessons. We believe our students have a right to education and to do this they require continuity and progression in their learning. Consistent attendance is an essential foundation in order to achieve potential.

It is the policy of our academy to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful academy career, and as an academy we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our academy will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-academy links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern regarding attendance.

If there are problems that affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, students and relevant support agencies to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

Why regular attendance is important

Any absence from school disrupts the learning pattern of students. One day's absence can put a student behind in five lessons and causes misunderstanding to occur in the next lesson. This causes learning to be lost which can never be gained back at the same level of expertise. In some lessons, where group work is vital, the learning of other students is also hindered. This is particular acute in years 10 and 11.

Ensuring your child attends school every day is your legal responsibility. Permitting absence without good reason could result in fines or prosecution. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Act to fail to secure the regular attendance at school of a child who is a registered pupil at the school. On conviction, the magistrates' court may impose a fine of up to £2,500 or imprisonment for up to 3 months, or both. In addition, you would obtain a criminal record.



Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: the school, parents, guardians and students. To help us all in this, as a school we will:

- Report to you at least three times a year on where your child's attendance is at and how this is impacting on their progress.
- Celebrate 100% and improving attendance through assemblies, letters and the yearly awards evening.
- Reward 100% and improving attendance through weekly checks, postcards and reward trips.
- Run promotional events throughout the year, including at parents evening to highlight the importance of attendance.
- This diamond is an easy way to see where your child is at with their attendance. It is displayed on the website under the attendance tab, it is also displayed in all classrooms and forms the basis of discussions with your child. Encouraging your child to stay green is important for their overall progress in school.



Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required in writing. The Academy will decide based on the information provided whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence.

Authorised Absence

Remember: Only the Principal can authorise absence. Parents cannot authorise absence.

- Illness [if absence is prolonged the principal may decide not to authorise the absence without medical evidence]
- Unavoidable medical appointments when supported by official medical documentation.
- Recognised religious observance.
- Funeral.
- Traumatic event.

- Wedding of close relatives.

Unauthorised Absence

The Principal will not authorise absence in the following circumstances:

- Shopping.
- Birthdays.
- Looking after other family members.
- Waiting in for trades people.
- Permission for holidays will not be provided by the academy.
- Unapproved sporting events.
- Hospital visits.
- Lateness to school – arriving after the register closes

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA, 10% absence or attendance of 90% or below):

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, in particular through the inclusion team and your child's Pastoral leader. You may receive a visit from a member of the team, a letter to inform you that your child is getting close to the PA mark or child may be placed on an attendance monitoring report.

Any absence resulting in attendance of 90% or below, regardless of the circumstances is a serious concern and may result in the Academy taking further action.

Absence procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact school, in particular the attendance manager, on the first day of absence.
- Contact school on any further days of absence.
- On your child's return to school, provide a letter explaining the absence or a medical note. This must be provided even if you have telephoned the school.

If your child is absent, the school will:

- Telephone you or text you on the first day of absence if you haven't contacted school.
- If applicable a home visit will be carried out, if no contact is made after 5 days a home visit will be made.
- Invite you in for a meeting to discuss absences if absences are a regular occurrence.
- Remind you of regular attendance and where your child is at if it falls to 90% through a letter.
- Send fines home for attendance causing concern or for unauthorised leave of absence.
- Refer you to the Local authority for prosecution if your child's attendance shows no improvement despite attempts to resolve concerns with you.

Telephone numbers:

To ensure your child's absence is reported to you quickly, please ensure you keep the school informed of any telephone changes. It is helpful for a mobile number so that texts can be sent.

Requests for leave of absence

Taking holidays in term time is not permitted by the academy. You may request time off through completing the application form requesting leave which can be obtained from the Attendance Manager. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may agree to authorise a holiday. All other requests will be denied.

In addition to holidays, parents may see it fit to request to take their child out of school during term time for other reasons. The Principal may not grant leave unless there are exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

- Death of parent / guardian or sibling of the student
- Life threatening or critical illness of the parent or sibling
- Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time
- Leave of absence granted at a previous school within the last six months (supporting documentation from the previous school is required)
- Religious observances – 1 day in the academic year will be granted for religious observance.

The principal will consider the circumstances the leave is being requested for along with the following factors:

- Student's current attendance record
- Year group the student is in
- How close to examinations the request falls
- The duration of the absence

All requests should be handed in to the Attendance Manager who will contact the parent / guardian with the final decision made.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable, to school or to lessons. Late students disrupts the learning of those around them and the late student themselves misses vital explanations of the day's work. A student who is only 5 minutes late to each lesson, misses three and half weeks of learning each year – learning which is lost and can never be made up for.

Late to school

The first session of the school day begins at 8.30am, therefore all student are expected to be in school ready to start this session at 8.25am. Any student who arrives after 8.30am will be signed in late for school. This will result in an automatic detention the same day after school. You will be informed of this detention via a text message.

Responsibilities

Everyone involved in the school community has a responsibility to promote good attendance.

However, our roles within that differ. Below sets out some guidance as to how those responsibilities look:

The **academy** has the responsibility to:

- Provide a quality education.
- Promote good attendance.
- Have a clear and fully understood registration process, in accordance with statutory regulations.
- Regular, accurate and efficient recording of attendance.
- Effective communication between the academy and the home.
- Early contact with parents when a student fails to attend.
- Take effective action when issues arise.

Students have the responsibility to:

- Attend the academy regularly.
- Arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- Inform their parents or a member of staff of any problem that may hinder them from attending the academy.
- Accept help, support and guidance when offered and deemed appropriate.

Parents / Guardians have the responsibility to:

- To ensure their children attend the academy.
- Contact the academy whenever any problem occurs that may keep them away from the academy.
- Contact the academy whenever their child is unable to attend.
- Ensure that their children arrive in the academy well prepared for the academy day.
- To work cooperatively with the academy and education authority to ensure that attendance is treated as a priority.

Reintegration

The return to the academy for a student after long-term absence requires special individualised planning.

The relevant Head of Year will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.

All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the Head of Year as soon as possible.

Programmes will be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate.

Support will be arranged between the Heads of Year, tutor, Attendance Manager and SENCo (if appropriate).

Parents will be involved and informed at each stage of the planned reintegration.

All strategies will be fully logged and form part of the students file.

Staff will be notified of the return of long term absentees via staff briefing sessions.

Organisational Roles

Principal

- To oversee and keep attendance and procedural policy under review with Senior Leaders and Academy Governors.

- To report to governors on levels of attendance.

Head of School

- To liaise with Heads of Year to set and monitor targets for individuals, groups and years.
- To liaise with Education Welfare Officers and agree appropriate actions/allocation of resources.
- To oversee the operation of the attendance and registration systems and the collation of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of Attendance Manager.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole academy.
- To report to SLT and leadership group on attendance matters.
- To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time.
- To ensure that attendance remains a priority of the academy.

Heads of Year

- To receive and analyse attendance data for the relevant year group.
- To reinforce good practice at meetings.
- To promote attendance in weekly assemblies.
- To organise the issuing of awards and rewards for the Principal's assembly
- To liaise with the Attendance Manager on a weekly basis.
- To facilitate reintegration and formulate a reintegration plan in conjunction with the Head of School, the Attendance Manager, SENCo and others, as appropriate.
- To initiate individual or group interviews as appropriate.
- To ensure that any sanctions issued for attendance and punctuality are completed.
- To ensure that their year groups attendance diamond is up to date (Pastoral Office).
- Heads of Year to monitor any students who are highlighted as pink or amber on the SOL tracker (Staff Share/Pastoral).
- Heads of Year to update the tracker with their actions – ongoing.

Form Tutor

- Challenge absences on a daily/weekly basis with individual students and return authorisation / amendment list on a weekly basis.
- Praise good attendance on an individual and group basis.
- Challenge any anomalies on daily/weekly attendance which suggest truancy.
- Request parental letters explaining absences and return to Attendance Manager.
- Encourage/advise individual students on importance of attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor all students' attendance especially those students returned following improvement.
- Make personal contact with parents by phone.
- Display attendance tracker data each week during nominated form time.
- Distribute rewards and incentives where appropriate.
- Form Tutors to update the SOL tracker noting any action/communication during the designated weekly attendance session.

Class Teacher

- To complete the register accurately and within the first 10 minutes of each lesson.
- To amend the register as necessary during the course of the lesson.
- To challenge non-attendance/ poor punctuality to lessons.
- To advise students of the impact on non-attendance on attainment and progress.
- To monitor attendance of individuals in lesson and advise the Attendance Manager of any anomalies.
- To inform individuals of work missed due to absence from lesson.
- To challenge truancy from lessons

Attendance Manager

- To liaise between academy and home in cases of students with poor attendance.
- To liaise with EWO to conduct home visits based upon information and referral by Heads of Year

and Head of School.

- To liaise with relevant individuals in cases of reintegration for students with poor attendance.
- To manage the academy's system of registration, advising the Head of School on any incidents of inaccuracy for relevant action.
- To produce data required for the scrutinisation of attendance by all relevant persons.
- To produce notification of absence letters.
- To act as a conduit for the flow of information concerning attendance between academy and parents.
- Each morning the Attendance Manager will identify the students who are absent and contact home to ascertain reason.
- To assist with the preparation of Notification of Absence letters and to make ready and available for posting.
- Monitors students on 'Unauthorised Absence' list (below 90% for previous academic year).
- To make home visits where needed
- To produce weekly registers for each form tutor.
- To update the attendance league on a weekly basis.