



Attend, Belong, Flourish:

Helping every child achieve their God-given potential



Attendance

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You are reading this as your child attends a DCAT school.
At DCAT we are committed to helping your child achieve their God-given potential. We take school attendance very seriously.

We consider ourselves to be very supportive and approachable and as such our family of schools and will try to make considerations for pupils who need extra support, where possible.

We are, however, bound by law to ensure that every pupil attends.

Missing a few days of school here and there may not seem a major issue, but research shows that it can have a significant impact on your child's learning. It is a fact that children who miss school can fall behind their peers and struggle to catch up academically, socially and emotionally .

Most of the work they miss is never made up, which can not only lead to gaps in their learning, but also have an impact on their future options and opportunities.

Poor attendance often starts at primary school and children who fall into this pattern are likely to underachieve at secondary school and beyond.

We also know that friendships can be affected by persistent absence.

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school (the equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year). It can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form relationships with their classmates and this can affect a child's wellbeing.

At DCAT we know that good attendance at school is the single most important factor to ensure that young people have the maximum life chances - attendance is strongly linked to educational achievement. Promoting positive school attendance is everyone's responsibility.

- Pupils who miss school risk failing to achieve what they are capable of
- Figures have shown that 90% of persistent, poor or non-attenders fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE and approximately one third achieve no GCSEs at all
- Developing good habits of attendance and punctuality are key life skills
- When pupils miss school... they miss out!





Good attendance is important in order for children to:

- Achieve their potential
- Develop a positive attitude towards school and good habits of punctuality and attendance
- See themselves as an important part of the school community and to value and respect school life. Schools recognise that this can only be achieved through a close partnership with parents
- 90% attendance = ½ day missed every week!
- Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost!
- Over the 7 years at primary school your child will have missed two thirds of a year!

What impact might this have on your child's future?

- 17 missed schools days means that in secondary school they could drop a whole GCSE grade
- 8 days absence = 96%
- 19 days absence = 90%

The table below shows estimated cumulative absent thresholds for both 15% and 10%, you can see how the absence levels build over the school year:

	15%	10%
Half Term 1	10 or more sessions	7 or more sessions
Half Term 1-2 (Autumn Term)	22 or more sessions	14 or more sessions
Half Term 1-3	30 or more sessions	20 or more sessions
Half Term 1-4 (Autumn & Spring Term)	38 or more sessions	25 or more sessions
Half Term 1-5	46 or more sessions	31 or more sessions
Half Term 1-6 (Full Academic Year)	56 or more sessions	38 or more sessions

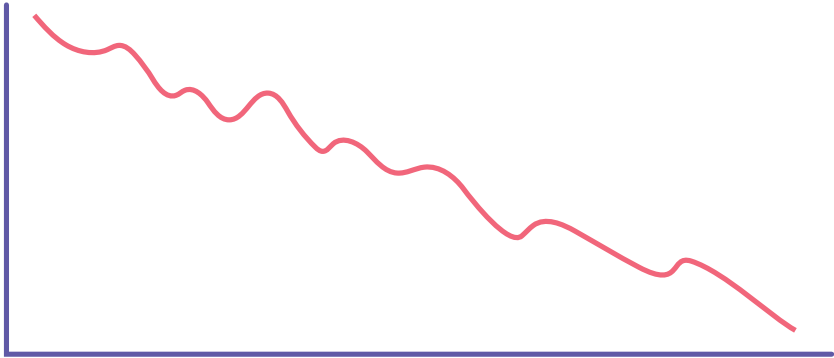
At DCAT we know that good attendance is important from the day your child starts at school. Getting into good attendance habits from day one, at an early age will allow children to flourish.

Research has shown poor attendance has a real impact on the number of GCSEs a pupil will achieve.



The impact of lost attendance

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Lost days = Lost grades

Research suggests that for every 17 days missed from school, your GCSE results will go down one grade!

“ School attendance is just as important on the last day of term as it is on the first. It’s encouraging to see more children in school than last year, but there is still more work to be done. ”

Gillian Keegan, The Education Secretary



Punctuality matters too!

Missed minutes = missed learning = missed opportunities!

Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability.

Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher, compromising everyone's education.

Minutes late per day	Equates to days of teaching lost in one year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3.5 Days	17 Lessons
10 mins	7 Days	35 Lessons
15 mins	10.5 Days	52 Lessons
20 mins	14 Days	70 Lessons
30 mins	21 Days	104 Lessons

Once your child has missed 10 school days (2 weeks) during a school year, they will not achieve a 95% school attendance rate for that year. Below is a table that you can use as a rough guide when considering your child's yearly school attendance rate.

Attendance Rate	95%	90%	85%
Number of school weeks missed	2 Weeks	4 Weeks	6 Weeks

As you can see from the table, a pupil with an 85% school attendance rate for the year will have missed nearly a whole school term. This level of school absence will definitely affect their ability to do well and achieve at school.

If your child is persistently absent, you will be contacted by their school.



What is DCAT's view on Holidays in term time?

Holidays taken during term time will not be authorised and will be categorised as an unauthorised absence with penalty notices being issued, unless circumstances are exceptional.

We are very aware of the essential role that good attendance plays in achieving good academic progress and good social and emotional skills. We therefore do not authorise holidays as this would be a direct contradiction of what we know is best for our pupils.

We are aware that holidays in term time maybe cheaper than those in school holidays and this can be a motivating factor. The penalty notice therefore attempts to remove this incentive as well as reinforcing the importance of school attendance.

At DCAT we listen, understand, empathise and support, however we will not tolerate poor attendance, as we are committed to ensuring the very best for the children in our schools.

What support is available in DCAT schools for our children and their families?

At DCAT we recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life.

This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents and carers should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

At DCAT our schools will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.





Strategies used will include:

- A commitment that Attendance is everyone's business and working in partnership is key
- Discussions with parents
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pupil voice
- Mentoring
- Specific interventions
- Reward systems
- Adaptations to the curriculum
- Behaviour support
- Attendance contracts
- Uniform
- Breakfast clubs
- Free School meals for eligible pupils
- Enrichment activities
- Access to specific support for children's wellbeing examples of which are Family Liaison officers, Counsellors, Mental Health First Aiders, Senior Mental Health Leads and Education Welfare Officer

For detailed expectations and specific roles and responsibilities in DCAT schools please refer to your child's school Attendance Policy which is available on each school's website or ask for a hard copy at the school office.

What happens at a DCAT School when a child's attendance drops?

The school will discuss your child's attendance with you and help you come up with a plan to make sure they get to school.

The emphasis will be on providing support to help you improve your child's attendance.

If absences continue, you may be asked to sign an attendance contract: a voluntary written agreement stating that you will work with your school to improve your child's attendance.

Ultimately, if your child continues to miss school, legal action can and will be taken. Consequences include a parenting order compelling you to do what the court says to improve your child's attendance; a fine of £80 for each parent/carer, rising to £160 if you don't pay within 21 days; and prosecution, which could lead to a community service order, a fine of up to £2,500, or a custodial sentence of up to three months. The monies of these fines do not go to the schools.

At DCAT schools we always want to help and explore all options but can only do this when we fully understand a family's situation. We do take a consistent approach to attendance and make no apologies for this because ultimately we want the very best for your child. Once attendance drops below 90% we do need medical evidence before we can authorise an absence.

Every school day counts!



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