

# Drummond Community High School Attendance Policy

## March 2023

### School Vision and Values

Our school vision statement is Nurturing Big Ambitions and this is underpinned by our CORE values of Commitment, Opportunity, Respect and Equity.

### Overview



This policy does not stand alone and is written in conjunction with the following key guidance and policy documents from both a local and national perspective:

- City of Edinburgh Council Attendance & Absence Procedures (2020)
- Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Promoting and Managing School Attendance (Scottish Government, 2019)
- School Attendance: A Guide for Parents (Scottish Government, 2009)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures Edinburgh & The Lothians (2015)
- Drummond Community High School Anti-Bullying Procedure (2023)

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the continuous education of all our pupils. Staff at Drummond Community High School seek to inspire every child with a passion for learning which will demonstrate to them that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. School will take appropriate and proportionate action, when necessary, in order to promote school attendance.

At Drummond Community High School, we know that every day counts in a child's education and we all strive to support our young people to, where possible, attend our school on time, every day. All adults in our school have a role to play in promoting, managing and supporting school attendance.

We work closely with Abbeyhill Primary School, Broughton Primary School and Leith Walk Primary School to take a consistent approach to promoting attendance across the Drummond Learning Community (see Appendix 1).

We work together with the Education Welfare Service to improve the attendance of all our children. The school can offer a wide range of supports for families to ensure children are in school. There are also a range of different strategies that can be offered by our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to support families and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. These range from written notifications to home visits or referrals to external support agencies.

### We Aim:

- To maximise the attendance of all our children and young people
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone.
- To monitor and support children and young people whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely with and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and multi-agency teams within the GIRFEC procedures. The school understands that there can be additional reasons for a child's non-attendance at school, as set out in *CEC Attendance & Absence Procedures (2020)* – Section 9 'Identifying and addressing barriers to attendance'.

**What is reasonably expected of our parents and carers?**

- To keep their child's absences to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a positive mindset to learn.
- A reason should be offered for any lateness and appropriate and proportionate support accepted when this is an issue.
- To work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any issues that may impede a child's attendance
- To be aware of the curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to how sporadic attendance can affect a child's progress.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.
- To keep the school updated should contact numbers or address details change.

**What is expected of us, as a school, by our Local Authority?**

- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- To develop procedures that enable our school to identify, follow up and record authorised and unauthorised absence, patterns of absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- To consistently record absence within the guidance of *The Education (Scotland Act (2016))* and City of Edinburgh Council procedures.
- To develop a range of strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- To encourage supportive and constructive communication between home and school.
- To develop procedures that could lead to a referral to the EWO for family support from the Area Attendance Advisory Group (AAAG) to help families ensure good attendance of their child at school.
- Support children in why they are experiencing difficulty in attending school, offer a tailored or bespoke curriculum that focuses on their interests and needs.
- Through the school's Anti-Bullying Procedure, promote an ethos of inclusion and equality where diversity and equality is celebrated and embraced and children feel comfortable to attend school.

It is important we understand the individual circumstances of children who are struggling to attend. Being a young carer, struggling to provide clean uniforms or a range of other family challenges can easily become barriers to attendance. For some children they may be physically able to attend school but difficulties related to their emotional wellbeing and mental health are significant barriers to their attendance. Working together through our GIRFEC assessment and planning process can help us identify and overcome barriers together with families

A child or young person with attendance between 85% and 95% will be closely monitored and supported to prevent them falling into persistent absenteeism. Reminder letters or phone calls to families can be considered if attendance starts to fall. They may be referred to our Pupil Support Officer (Attendance) or EWO.

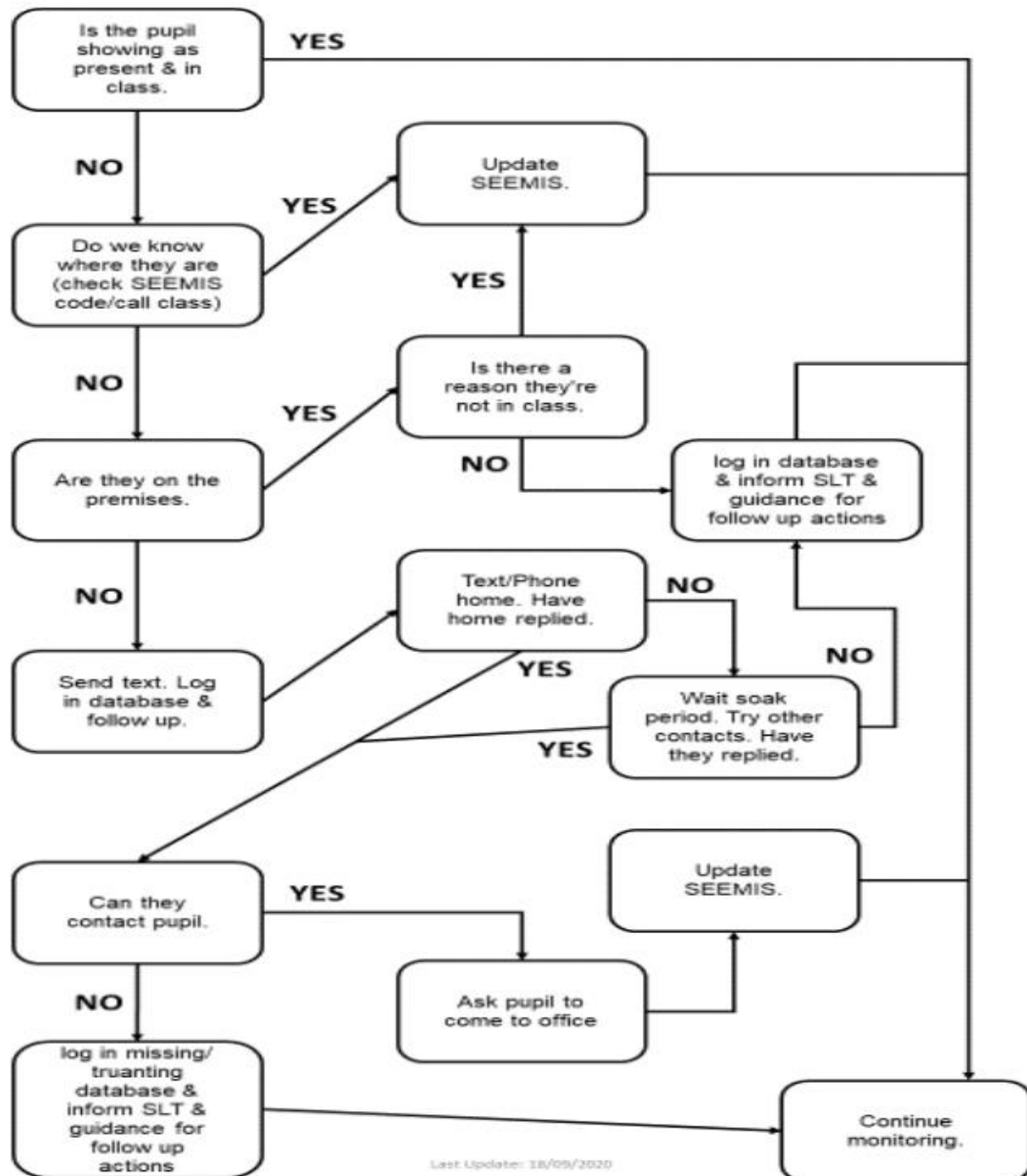
A child who has an attendance figure of 85% or below from frequent/sporadic or unexplained absences, will be referred to the EWO.

Our Breakfast Club is free and open to all pupils from 8.00am. School starts at 8.32am when pupils should register in their tutor classes. All pupils arriving after tutor time must report to the school office and will be recorded on SEEMIS as being late for school.

## Roles and Responsibilities

<b>Our Role(s)</b>	<b>Our Responsibility</b>
<b>All Staff</b>	<p>Reinforce importance of coming to school and being on time.</p> <p>Noticing if pupils are absent, missing activities or late.</p> <p>Praising good attendance, particularly of those who we know do not always attend or may often be late in.</p> <p>Never ask a child publicly why they have not been in school or why they are late. There may be a reason for this that the child would feel embarrassed or singled out in saying.</p> <p>Never make any comment to the child that attendance and late-coming is 'their fault'.</p>
<b>School Admin/ Office Staff</b>	<p>Warmly welcoming our pupils when arriving late, sympathetically asking for a reason, if appropriate to see if any support is needed.</p> <p>Inform school management, where appropriate.</p> <p>Text messaging using GroupCall and communicating with families to confirm the whereabouts of pupils as part of completion of the daily registration processes.</p> <p>Updating SEEMIS with TBC / Medical / Absence information</p>
<b>Class Teachers</b>	<p>Group tutor builds relationships with pupils each morning – absence notes, daily print out of Seemis anomalies etc</p> <p>Class teachers record period by period attendance including latecoming.</p> <p>Class teachers to alert school office if a pupil is missing that was present during the previous period –duty head would follow up.</p> <p>Inform Senior Leadership Team of any patterns of attendance or late-coming, especially if this is new or out of character.(Appendix 6)</p>
<b>Pupil Support Officer (PSO): Attendance</b>	<p>Monitor attendance of identified young people.</p> <p>Have supportive conversations with families where there are regular absences or lates and look for ways of improving school attendance.</p> <p>Work closely with School Senior Management and engage as part of any supports that need to be put in place.</p> <p>Meet with PSLs/Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) regularly to discuss 85-92% and actions and supports that may be required including 1:1 or groupwork.</p> <p>Link with PSO in Cluster Primaries</p>
<b>Pupil Support Leaders (PSLs)</b>	<p>Meet with our PSO to look at attendance statistics and lates.</p> <p>Meet with our EWO weekly to discuss below 85% and actions and supports that may be required.</p> <p>Constructively inform, communicate and discuss with families about the reasons for absence or late-coming and how the school and partner agencies may be able to help them.</p> <p>Send 'trigger' letters to families below 90% attendance.</p> <p>Coordinate YPPMS to consider referrals to Wellbeing Hub/Nurture Hub and Flexible Timetables to support re-integration to school following prolonged absence.</p>
<b>Senior Leadership Team</b>	<p>Share the importance of good attendance regularly with parents in school newsletters, school website, social media and parental events.</p> <p>Issue praise postcards</p> <p>Hold Year Group assemblies to promote good attendance.</p> <p>Attendance summaries are sent home in conjunction with Tracking Reports.</p> <p>House attendance statistics (&lt;85 and 85-92%) reviewed at House Head meetings (DHT and PSL) once a month</p> <p>School Attendance (&lt;85 and 85-92%) reviewed at SLT as part of quality assurance procedures four times a year.</p>

## Procedure for Period by Period Attendance Monitoring



### **Communication with parents and carers**

School staff develop positive relationships with pupils and parents to ensure difficulties are discussed and resolved. There is a collaborative approach with families in line with local GIRFEC approaches.

- House team communicates with parents when attendance drops below 92%.
- PSLs contact parents by phone to discuss attendance concerns
- All parents and carers are made aware of Pupil Support Leader contact details via the school website and Headteacher's Bulletin.
- Parents and carers are routinely invited to Young Person Planning Meetings.
- Pupil Support Officer (Attendance) works with identified cohorts (85-92% attendance) including phone contact with parents

### **Reintegrating pupils following a period of absence**

- The school Wellbeing Hub (S1-3) and Nurture Hub (S1-6) provide support for pupils experiencing barriers to attendance
- The school PSO (attendance) is trained in LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management) to support pupils to address barriers to attendance
- Flexible Timetables support re-integration to school following prolonged absence or where there are attendance concerns
- ASLS teacher supports pupils to return to school eg through Youth 180 group

### **Strategies for promoting attendance and managing absence**

- School vision statement 'Nurturing Big Ambitions', CORE values and Attendance Matters Campaign are used to underpin messages to promote good attendance
- Positive postcards sent home by Year Head
- House assemblies are used to promote attendance
- PSLs build positive relationships through 1:1 entitlement interviews and delivery of PSE
- Positive relationships exist between school admin staff and parents and carers
- School is currently working towards the Rights Respecting Schools Award and the LGBT Charter.
- Mental Health Award offered to all pupils in S3
- School Relationships for Learning Policy reflects the principles of Included Engaged and Involved Part 1 and Part 2.
- Diversity is regularly celebrated through whole school events.
- Free breakfast club, uniform bank and food bank is offered to all pupils.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Staff are encouraged to report all wellbeing concerns (including regular absence from class) to the relevant PSL.
- Pupil Support Leaders and Educational Welfare Officer review individual attendance summaries at weekly meetings. Agreements on monitoring, supports and interventions are put in place, where required.
- House attendance statistics (<85 and 85-92%) are reviewed at House Head meetings (DHT and PSL) once a month
- Evaluation of interventions are reviewed at Integrated Pupil Support Meetings.
- School Attendance (<85 and 85-92%) is reviewed at Senior Leadership Team meetings as part of quality assurance procedures four times a year
- The Local Authority publishes monthly attendance overviews for all its schools; this includes data for schools across the Learning Community, care experienced pupils and Locality comparison data. This is reviewed at SLT meetings and resulting actions discussed with the Integrated Pupil Support Team