Supporting Positive Attendance Strategy

Our Shared Vision: *Students at Deans Community High School will be inspired through high quality learning and teaching, in a safe, inclusive environment, to confidently achieve and attain the very best they can to succeed in life, learning and work*

Rationale

Our Attendance strategy reflects current National and Local guidelines on attendance as well as West Lothian Council's Safe Arrival at School policy. It has been created to support us to work in partnership with students, their families, and partner agencies when students are struggling to maintain a positive school attendance.

Aims

The staff at Deans Community High School believe that regular school attendance is vital to raising attainment and preparing students for successful futures. Poor school attendance can also have a lasting impact on social connectedness, emotional and physical wellbeing. We are committed to supporting students and their families to identify barriers to regular attendance and to identify effective interventions to ensure they can access education in a meaningful way. Improvement can only happen when we work in partnership with young people and their families. This strategy will outline the following:

- The roles and responsibilities for students, parents/carers, and school staff.
- Procedures for reporting absences.
- School procedures for notifying parents/carers of absences and timekeeping issues (including our safe arrivals procedures).
- School commitment to supporting students and their families to improve school attendance.

All partners have a role to play in supporting positive attendance at schools.

Key Responsibilities

We expect pupils to:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day

We expect parents/carers to:

- Encourage and support their child to attend school
- Ensure that they contact school whenever their children are unable to attend (see how to report absence below).
- Ensure that their children arrive on time and are well prepared for the day

Parents/guardians and pupils can expect the following from the school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Early contact when a pupil is absent without a reasonable explanation
- Early contact when a pupil is late on a regular basis
- Prompt and confidential action on any problem which is impacting attendance.
- Identification of interventions where appropriate.
- A high quality of educational provision

Role of PSA staff

PSA staff are the first point of contact for attendance. Not only do they play a vital role in ensuring accurate recording of absence in a school but are also the first line in monitoring patterns of explained and unexplained absence in pupils.

- Ensure that parents/carers are informed of unexplained absences
- Follow Safe Arrivals procedures.
- Update attendance records following response from Group Call or other means of communication (i.e. phone call or letter)
- Monitor attendance for house group and identify any concerns or patterns of absence.
- Share attendance concerns with house team at weekly house meeting.
- Discuss attendance concerns with students.

Role of the Class Teacher

All teaching staff must

- maintain accurate registers for every period they teach – this must be completed in the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
- update registers promptly if a pupil is late to class.
- share patterns of attendance concerns with the house team (e.g. if they notice a pupil is consistently missing period 1).
- contact PSA with any anomalies on the register (e.g. a pupil coded SEL) so this can be updated.

Role of the Tutor Teacher

Tutor teachers are the first line of pastoral support. As they see all pupils daily, they are often the most effective person to support early interventions. They should:

- Check in with pupils daily around issues relating to wellbeing.
- Share individual attendance and timekeeping information with all students through 1-to-1 conversations – this should be done once per week.
- Share any attendance concerns with Head of House or Pastoral Lead.

Role of the Head of House or Pastoral Lead

- To have an overview of attendance and timekeeping for house caseload.
- To follow attendance concerns procedures outlined below.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to offer support for students who are struggling with positive attendance.
- To liaise with Inclusion and Support Service Attendance team if problematic attendance persists.
- To ensure that the Attendance Group is supplied with accurate information; and representation is made by the Head of House or DHT at meetings
- Maintain an up-to-date risk assessment for Safe Arrivals.
- To issue Achievement Certificates to students who have achieved 95%-100% attendance

Role of the Depute Head Teacher (Pastoral Support)

- To ensure procedures for the recording of attendance and absences are in place and implemented
- Monitor and review procedures regularly
- Manage the Attendance Strategy and the Pastoral Support Team
- To ensure policy and procedures for the recording of attendance and absences are in place and are implemented
- To monitor and review procedures with the Head Teacher
- To review whole school attendance data each term

Updating Absences

Any notes to explain absences should be sent to appropriate PSA staff who will update student record. Information from phone calls is an acceptable basis for making amendments - although staff must be vigilant in ensuring that the information is from a reliable source. If in doubt, consult the Head of House. Advance notice of holidays or other absences will be marked on the register in advance by PSA.

Pupils who become unwell during the school day

If a pupil becomes unwell during the school day, PSA staff must contact emergency contact before a pupil is allowed to leave school. Any pupil sent home will be marked 'medical' for the rest of the day. Parents/carers should not be arranging for a pupil to leave school without the school being aware.

Period by Period Registration

Students will be registered at the start of every lesson. Electronic registers must be completed within the first 10 minutes of a lesson. Students who are absent should be marked TBC. Students who arrive late should be marked LATE. If a pupil who is present has an attendance code (e.g. SEL, WRK etc) the teacher should call PSA who will amend this.

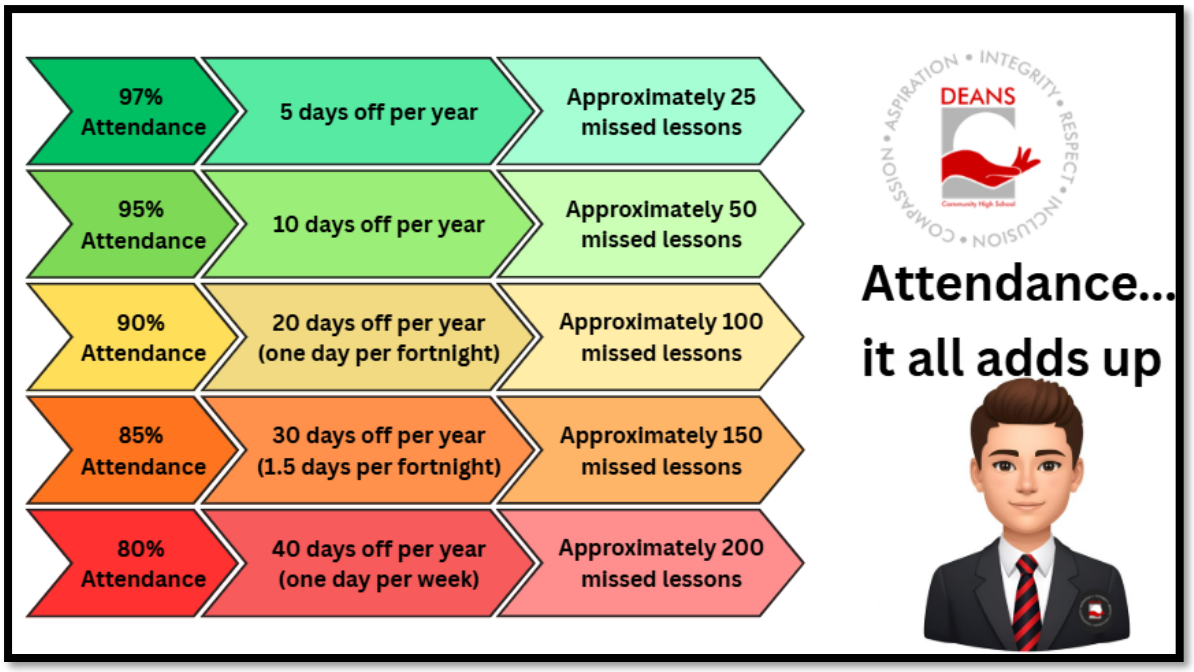
Late coming

All doors into the school will be locked by 8.45am. Thereafter pupils will enter by the front door. Pupils arriving late should report to the school office then make their way to class where they will be registered by their class teacher.

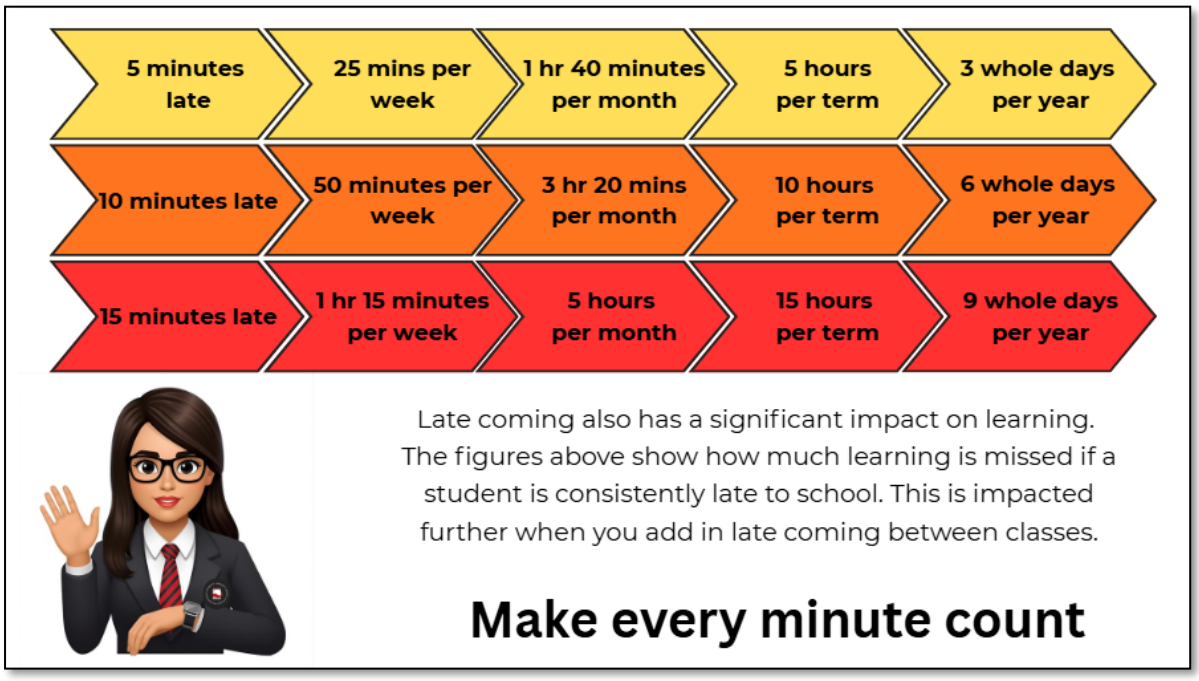
If parents/carers know their child will be late to school, they should contact PSA to make them aware.

Holidays During Term Time

Permission must be granted for holidays in term time. However, this will only be in exceptional circumstances. On receipt of a letter from parents indicating that they intend taking their child/children on holiday during term time, it should be sent to the Head Teacher. Based on the information, the Head Tacher will either grant or refuse the request and the register will be updated accordingly.



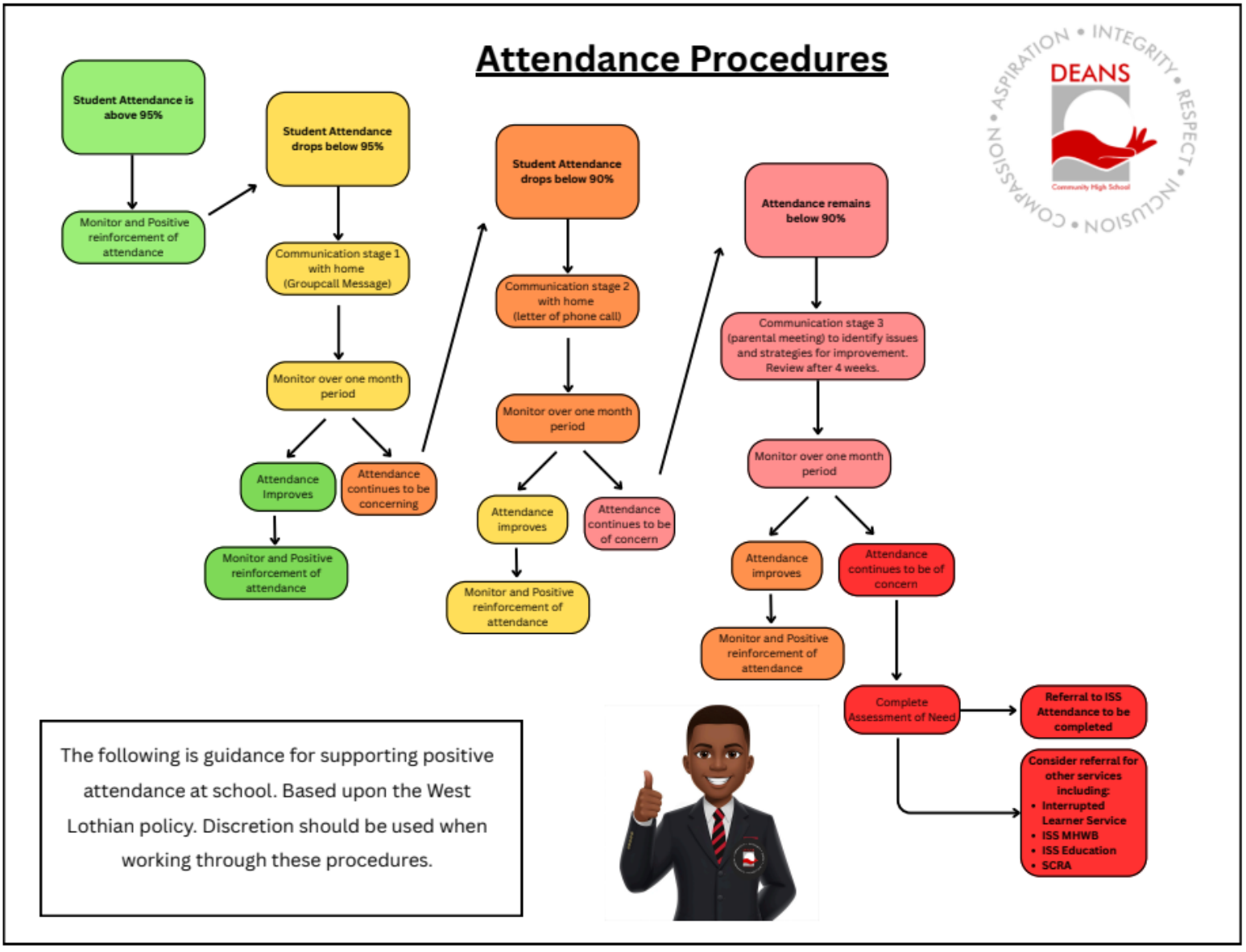
The above graphic shows the impact that different levels of attendance have on learning. It is therefore vital to work towards improving attendance at school when it begins to drop. Students should be striving to have attendance of at least 95%.



Late coming (in the morning and between classes) will impact learning too. It is vital that students strive to arrive at school and at classes on time.

Attendance Procedures

Below shows the procedures for monitoring attendance and notes action to be taken at each stage. All communication should be logged via pastoral notes. See appendices for template letters for stage 2 and stage 3.



Partnership working to support improvement

We recognise that improving attendance is a shared responsibility between the school, parents/carers, and external agencies. The school will work proactively with families to identify barriers to attendance and provide tailored support. Where necessary, we will collaborate with local authority services, health professionals, and other relevant organisations to ensure pupils receive the help they need to attend regularly and achieve their potential. We will strive to do this in a supportive and non-judgemental way.

Our approach includes:

- Maintaining open and respectful communication with parents/carers.
- Sharing attendance data regularly and discussing concerns promptly.
- Offering early intervention strategies before issues escalate.
- Coordinating multi-agency meetings where additional support is required.



Examples of school-based supports

- **Regular Communication:** Phone calls, emails or meetings to discuss attendance concerns and agree on action plans.
- **Wellbeing Support:** Access to pastoral teachers, support for learning staff, and trusted adults to address emotional or social barriers.
- **Flexible Timetabling:** Short-term adjustments where appropriate.
- **Breakfast Club:** Providing a positive start to the day and reducing lateness.
- **School-based counselling service:** Referral to Your Space counsellor to support pupils to develop strategies to overcome challenges.
- And many more

External Agencies

We pride ourselves on having extremely positive relationships with our partner agencies. Referrals for further support will be made where appropriate by pastoral staff. This is normally done through the Inclusion and Support Service referral form which parents can also complete. Services include but are not limited to:

- Inclusion and Support Service Attendance team
    - current allocated worker for DCHS is Katharine Gunn
- Inclusion and Support Service Education team, mental Health team, Parenting team
- Children 1st
- Youth Action Project
- CLD Youth Services
- Educational Psychology Service
- Carers of West Lothian
- Social Work
- Families Together
- CAMHS tier 2
- Wellbeing Scotland

This strategy was co-created with students, staff, parents/carers and partner agencies. This will be reviewed **October 2027.**