



Denton Community College

'Attendance and Your Child'- A Guide for Parents and Carers

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Introduction

All of us (us, you, your child) play an important role in ensuring that your son/daughter maximises their potential. Denton Community College seeks to create a learning environment that enables and encourages all members of its community to achieve excellence and to feel proud to be a part of it- **'High expectations no excuses.'** For your son/daughter to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend college every day and are on time.

Denton Community College is committed to:

- Supporting you in order to ensure that your child attends college regularly in order to benefit from their education
- Reducing levels of unauthorised absence in accordance with Government prescribed targets through a strategy which focuses on raising levels of overall attendance
- Informing and supporting you in order to fulfil our legal responsibilities
- Taking legal action when appropriate, fulfilling our statutory duty to ensure that all children attend for the required amount of time

The legal statutes on which our attendance procedures are based are:

1989 Children Act
1996 Education Act
1998 Crime and Disorder Act
2000 Criminal Justice and Court Services Act.
2004 Children Act



Absence Procedures

How to contact us:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of any absence (Before 8.30am) on **0161 3373838**. Before 8am, this is an answerphone service. Parents/carers must state the name and form of their child and the reason for any absence.
- Send a note in on the first day your child returns with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text each parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not received any contact
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer, Attendance Leader, College Nurse (or other relevant agency) if absences and concerns continue
- Consider instigating legal proceedings (fine or prosecution via the Magistrates Court) if warnings have been given and no improvements are made

Please ensure that we always have an up-to-date telephone number to contact you on. This is essential so that college can make contact with you to share important information and reach you should we need to do so urgently.

College Targets (2019-2020)

We set targets each year in order to improve attendance and every child has an important part to play in these targets being met.

The minimum level of attendance for college this year (2019-2020) is **96%** attendance. However, we consider 98% to be the personal target for the majority of our students. We will keep you updated about how well your child attends in relation to this target.

The Importance of Regular Attendance- The Impact of Poor Attendance on Attainment

All absence impacts on the progress your child makes and regular absence can be particularly damaging.

It is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends college. If you allow your child to be absent from college without a good reason you are committing an offence in law and you may be prosecuted.

Above all, poor attendance impacts negatively on the levels/grades that your child achieves. To put this statement into context:



90% attendance is equivalent to half a day off college EVERY week.

Over the course of a full year, 90% attendance is equivalent to at least 4 WEEKS of missed education.

Government research has proven that a student who misses 17 days of college will drop at least 1 GCSE GRADE IN EVERY SUBJECT that they do. Students who have 25 or more days off in any year drop at least 2 GCSE GRADES IN EVERY SUBJECT that they do.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from college has to be classified by the college (not by the parent/carer), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required by phone and in writing.

Authorised Absences are absences from college that we have given permission for. These absences may be due to such things as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in college time, or emergencies. (We ask that where possible appointments should be made outside of college time.)

Unauthorised Absences are absences that the college does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead us to use sanctions and/or legal proceedings against each parent/carer.

Examples of Unauthorised Absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off college unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the college day
- Absences that are not properly explained
- Children who arrive at college too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or for birthdays etc
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst it is likely that your child will be off college at some time in their college career because they are genuinely ill, sometimes illness can be given as a reason when a child is reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between us, you and your child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please do not cover up this absence or give in to pressure to excuse your son/daughter from attending. This reaction gives the impression that attendance does not matter and will allow this reluctant attitude to college to become a real problem.

Lateness and Truancy

The college day starts at **8.40 am** and we expect all students to be in Form at this time.

Registers are marked by **8.45 am** and all students will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.



At **9.45am** and **2.15pm** (for afternoon registration) the registers will be closed. In accordance with legal regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you face the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued by us if the problem continues.

If your child is late repeatedly, you may be asked to meet with Miss Manuell (Attendance Officer) or Miss Kilbane (Assistant Headteacher) or your child's Head of Year in order to resolve the problem. Please remember that you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child into college on time.

If your child is late, staff will use the L code and will enter the number of minutes that your child is late by. In the case of truancy, the Attendance Officer will mark your child as absent (code N) and notify you immediately.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child is late they are not only missing out on their own education, they also interrupt lessons when they enter late, disrupting the learning of others. This is unfair.

If your child is late to registration, your child will be put in a break time detention on the same day. If your child is late on two or more occasions during the week, he/she will be placed in a further detention in order to catch up on any missed work.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Your child will become a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their education. Absence at this level does considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we require the fullest support and co-operation from you to tackle this.

We have to report our number of Persistent Absentees at the end of every half term and as a result, we monitor all absence thoroughly. If your child reaches the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark, he/she is given priority and you will be informed of our concerns.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral/attendance routines and we also combine this monitoring with academic mentoring where absence impacts on attainment.

Holidays in Term Time

Since September 2013, the law does not allow holiday absence to be taken in term time, therefore Denton Community College does not allow holiday absence

Taking a holiday in term time has a negative impact on the education of a child. We expect you to help us by not taking your child away in college time.

Remember, any savings you may make by taking a holiday in college time is offset by the cost/loss to your child's education.



Any holiday taken in term time is classed as unauthorised and will attract a legal sanction such as a Penalty Notice and fine.

Legal Action- (The types of legal action that may be taken against you if your child fails to attend regularly or fails to attend WITHOUT our permission)

Penalty Notices for Non- College Attendance

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from college. This means that when a student has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any 12 week period (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if the child persistently arrives late for college after the close of registration, their parent/s or carer/s may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £60, which must be paid within 28 days. If payment is made after 28 days but within 42 days, the penalty is increased to £120. Where a fine remains unpaid after 42 days, the matter will be referred and legal action may be taken.

Prosecution for Non-College Attendance

Failure to ensure the regular college attendance and good punctuality of your child may result in Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council taking legal action against you in the Magistrates Court. If your child fails to attend regularly and punctually we may refer you, with evidence, for consideration in relation to prosecuting you for an offence under the Education Act 1996.

Conviction of an offence under section 444(1) may result in a fine of £1000. Under section 444 (1A) convictions may result in a fine of £2500 or a prison sentence.

If you require advice or support concerning the attendance of your child or wish to clarify any of the information contained within this guide, please contact Miss S Manuell (Attendance Officer) on 0161 3373838.