



Dallimore Primary and Nursery School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

We believe:

Good attendance is essential if children are to take full advantage of opportunities offered to them at school and to develop the educational and social skills which are to equip them for life.

We aim to achieve good attendance by implementing this policy through the ethos of the school whereby parents and carers, staff, children and the local authority can work together in partnership.

We encourage good attendance by liaison with families, consulting with other agencies when this is appropriate and we regularly monitor attendance and work to solve any identified problems quickly.

Our attendance policy is based on equal opportunities for all.

Our Attendance Target is **96%**

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Promote good attendance as the norm, encouraging the government recommended rate of 95% or above for each child
- Help every child to reach their maximum potential unhindered by unnecessary breaks in their school life
- Demonstrate that good attendance is valued by the school

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement in increased attendance and dealing with difficulties

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Help children to be more aware of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality by classroom discussion and reward systems
- Identify barriers to good attendance and punctuality and provide appropriate interventions for families who we are working with to improve attendance
- Communicate with parents in relation to their child's attendance
- Recognise and support the key role of all staff in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- Continue regular contact with outside agencies when necessary
- Use DfE and Derbyshire County Council guidance and documentation to ensure that procedures and approaches are up to date and reflective of national and local expectations.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the registers are completed accurately at the beginning of each session
- Liaising with the Headteacher/ School Business Manager regarding any concerns about attendance and patterns of absence or punctuality
- Ensuring, along with colleagues, that the ethos in the class and the school is supportive of good attendance

Headteacher

The Head Teacher is the attendance co-ordinator and is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school has a robust attendance policy and that this is reviewed regularly
- Organising rewards for good attendance
- Supporting staff in monitoring and dealing with problems
- Supporting families and children in sorting out difficulties
- Publicising the school's attendance record when required
- Ensuring that the information entered into the MIS from registers is accurate and up to date.

Administration staff

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Undertaking **First Day Response** for children who are absent:
 - by text before 9.30am
 - If no response from parent/carers, contact should be made by telephone by 11.30am
 - If no response, contact is also tried via Class Dojo
 - The Designated Safeguarding Leads will inform the Office of any children who require communication with Social Care in relation to attendance i.e. the family are subject to a child protection/ child in need plan. If such a child is absent, DSLs will decide whether the relevant worker should be contacted to inform them of the absence/ lack of response and make the call.
- If no further communication is received, then an absence letter is sent to the parents/ carers by post. These are sent out weekly for absences from the previous week.
- Collating an evacuation report following the submission of the electronic registers, entering the appropriate codes for children who are absent and those arriving late, after the gates have closed at 8.55am and when the registration period has closed at 9.10am.
- Recording verbal and telephone messages from parents in writing and passing on this information to class teachers (via the electronic registration system), School Business Manager, Headteacher, designated safeguarding lead or outside agency as necessary. Notes are also entered on the daily register/ week view screen.
- Producing various reports required by the Headteacher, governors and the Local Authority.

- Liaising with Learning Mentors to ensure that any parents of absent children on their caseload are contacted to establish the reason for this and offer any support and advice

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Making sure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented by illness or medical appointments
- Letting the school know, as soon as possible, why their child is absent
- Providing medical/ dental appointment information as necessary
- Talking to the class teacher or Headteacher as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school, so that problems can be identified quickly and dealt with

Registration

The school doors open at 8.45am and children are expected to be in school by 8.55am. This gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using Arbor. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

Lateness

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 8.55am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.10am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect a child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 8.55am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where children are persistently being marked with the attendance codes L or U we will:

- contact parents to let them know that this is causing concern
- invite parents to an informal meeting in order to ascertain the reason for this
- provide incentives and rewards for pupils
- offer support such as breakfast club, alternative entry to school (e.g. entry through the school office if the child is finding it difficult to enter in the normal way)

Absences

The school communicates regularly with parents about attendance issues through newsletters and parent consultations. A copy of this policy is available on the school website & all parents are issued with a summary and leaflet when their child is admitted to school (including Nursery). Copies are also available in the school office and on the school website.

If a child is absent from school and no notification has been received, parents are contacted on the same day by text or message on Dojo to ascertain why their child is absent. If no response is received, then a follow up phone call is made and, if still no response, a formal written letter is sent to the parents to ascertain the reason why their child has been absent from school.

At least once a term (usually once per half term) an attendance review is carried out to ascertain overall attendance levels and individual attendance levels. A report is created to track progress and trends and children whose attendance is a cause for concern are contacted. At this stage, formal attendance meetings can be triggered and help identified. This may include liaising with other agencies, meetings with parents and attendance targets set.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013, the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Request for Leave of Absence form available from the school office and handed in 2 school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

If a parent/ carer requires some support from school with regard to attendance or punctuality, they should contact either the Headteacher or the Family Liaison Officer who would be happy to help and offer advice.

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

National framework for penalty notices

The national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category, the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

GDPR and Data Protection

Data will be processed in line with the General Data Regulations Policy and Data Protection Regulations.

Date of policy: June 2025

Review date: Summer 2026