



Aims/Rationale

Dussindale Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

At Dussindale Primary School we believe that regular school attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become responsible, organised and motivated adults. We value all pupils and for a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents and carers the importance of regular, punctual attendance, and how this will benefit them.

As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community.

Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's 'Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection' policy.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE 2018) states that:

Governing bodies and proprietors should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Children Missing in Education (DFE 2016) states that:

Where there is concern for a child's welfare, this should be referred to local authority children's social care. If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police should also be involved. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, it is essential to take action without delay

Absences from school:

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census

Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time is discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence. Leave of Absence forms are available on the school website or from the school office.

If a child is absent on the fifth day of a week in which 4 days unauthorised holiday leave has been taken, the school will expect to have evidence that the child is absent for medical reasons on the fifth day, such as a response to a phone call to the home.

The school will follow the Local Authority system where any pupil who has an attendance of 85% or less with at least 15% unauthorised absence over a 6 week period OR 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence will meet the criteria for legal intervention which could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.

Registers

Registers are completed by the class teacher, or by any person providing cover for the class teacher. These are entered on to the management information system.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.50am. The afternoon registration will be at 1.15pm. The registers will remain open for thirty minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close.

First Day Absence

Parents/carers are asked to telephone or e-mail the school before 9.20am to report a pupil's absence. If the school has not had contact from the parents of an absent pupil by 9.20am, the school office staff will attempt to contact the family by telephone, e-mail or text. The school administrator will transfer any information to the register through the MI system. Teachers can access this information through their class computer.

If the school administrator is unable to contact the family to ascertain the reason for absence, they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The school office and the DSL will continue to try and contact the parents throughout the day, until contact is made.

Continuing Absence

Parents/carers need to update the school office each day (by telephone or email) until the period of absence is over.

Ten Days Absence

The school will follow the Local Authority (LA) Child Missing in Education protocol. Any pupil who is absent (without an explanation) for 10 consecutive days will be reported to the LA and the school will submit a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team. The school will include details of the action that has been taken.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the office staff who manage the register to be aware of, and bring to the attention of the headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one, or ask for medical evidence in the form of a medical certificate, prescription, doctor's note, etc. In other cases the school will seek advice from the Local Authority Attendance Helpline. Families may be signposted to Norfolk Early Help.

Persistent Absence [PA]

The school will contact parents to inform them when their child's attendance is below 92%. All pupils whose attendance level falls below 90%, unless due to known medical issues, will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the headteacher/deputy headteacher.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome and that as far as possible, they are given an opportunity to catch up on missed work.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

- Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. These could include:
- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

The registration system

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorized absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Record preservation

Attendance records will be kept in line with our Record Management Policy. Attendance registers and letters authorising absence will be kept whilst the pupil is at school, plus one year, then securely disposed of. Non-identifiable summary statistics are held after the initial retention period for twenty five years after the pupil's date of birth. Computer registers are printed out every half term and are also preserved as electronic back-ups.

Register Security

Registers are taken to the school office at the end of every registration period, and the information is entered on to the management information system.

Attendance Targets

The Senior Leadership team will set annual school attendance targets based on an analysis of performance. Targets will relate to national averages.

Our schools targets are:

Attendance rate of 97% or above

Persistent absence rate of 1.9% or less

Any pupil with attendance below 90% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences.

Legal Framework

- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

This policy pays due regard to (but not limited to):

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DFE 2018)
- *DFE School Attendance Guidance* (DFE 2016)
- *Children Missing in Education* (DfE 2016)
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children*
- *School attendance parental responsibility measures (2015)*

Review Date: September 2019