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| **Dale Community**  **Primary School**  **Pupil Attendance and Leave of Absence**  **Policy** |



**Head Teacher: Louise Foster**

**Chair of Governors: Russell Langley**

**Policy Approved by: Governors Behaviour and Safety Committee**

Policy reviewed by: Governors Behaviour and Date: 1 October 2019

Safety Committee

Policy reviewed by: Governors Behaviour and Date: 9 March 2021

Safety Committee

Policy reviewed by: Governors Behaviour and Date: 24 January 2023

Safety Committee

Policy reviewed by: Governors Behaviour and Date: 30 January 2024

Safety Committee

**PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

1. **Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

* Promoting good attendance
* Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
* Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
* Acting early to address patterns of absence
* Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality.

1. **Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

* Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents)
* Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents)
* Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made)
* [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made)

It also refers to:

* [School census guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census)
* [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2)
* [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools)

1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community including pupils, parents, governors and staff.

**3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

* Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
* Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
* Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
* Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
* Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
* Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

**3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

* Implementation of this policy at the school
* Leading attendance across the school
* Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
* Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
* Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
* Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
* Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
* Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
* Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
* Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
* Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.

**3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

* Following up absences through register checks, phone calls, home visits
* Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8) including actioning letters and holding meetings with parents
* Identifying and liaising with the Education Welfare Service regarding pupils as appropriate, arranging meetings and sharing information
* Reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
* Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
* Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
* Promoting the importance of good attendance and punctuality throughout all school actions including updates on the school newsletter
* Monitoring all intervention strategies and their impact on whole school attendance
* Organising rewards for good and improving attendance e.g. 100% rewards and certificates, improved attendance and punctuality certificates.

The attendance officer is Katrina Holness and can be contacted via 01332 760070

**3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for:

* Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via the register on Integris by 9.15am and 1.30pm every day
* Be aware of the attendance data for their class and encourage children to attend regularly.

**3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

* Providing regular attendance reports to school staff
* Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
* Transfer calls from parents/carers to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

**3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

* Make sure their child attends every day, on time
* Call (01332 760070) or email [attendance@dale.derby.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@dale.derby.sch.uk) the school to report their child’s absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
* Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
* Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

**3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

* Attend school every day on time

1. **Recording Attendance**

**4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

Attendance registers are taken twice a day. Morning registers open at 9.00am and close at 9.15am. Pupils who arrive after 8.50am must report to the school reception area where they will be recorded in the late book. The school register will be amended to show their presence in school. Similarly, pupils who leave school during the day, for example because of illness or medical appointments will also be recorded by the administration staff. Pupils who arrive after 9.15am will be marked as absent. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

The attendance register will mark whether every pupil is:

* Present
* Attending an approved off-site educational activity
* Absent
* Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

* Whether the absence is authorised or not
* The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
* The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years plus the current academic year.

**4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil’s parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school office.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor’s note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

**4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil’s parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. If your child has an appointment booked during school hours, please telephone the school office on 01332 760070.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil’s parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

**4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

* Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
* After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school discourages late arrival as this will impact on learning and will be alert to patterns of lateness. For safety reasons, it is important that pupils who are late report immediately to the school office for registration. In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, the school may keep registers open for a longer period.

**4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

* Call the pupil’s parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil’s emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit and if necessary alert the Police and/or Social Care
* Identify whether the absence is approved or not
* Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
* Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

**4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child’s attendance and absence levels via termly written reports and termly parents’ evening meetings.

1. **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

**5.1 Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

All absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school has agreed on a satisfactory explanation.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

* **Illness, medical and dental appointments** - Where the school believes that a child is genuinely unwell the absence will be authorised. Pupils attending a medical or dental appointment but arriving before the registers close will be marked as late, pupils arriving after the registers close will be marked as medical. If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or goes home because of illness, no absence will be recorded for that session. The school will keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school may consult the School Health Service, or the pupil’s GP. A pupil receiving medical treatment on site will be marked as present.
* **Days of religious observance** - This is absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. The school will be sensitive to such requests but the request must be made prior to absence. Only one day will be authorised per religious observance when this day falls in term time. See Appendix 2.

**5.2 Family holidays during term time**

Parents should not take pupils on extended leave/holidays in term time. Leave in term time will be unauthorised.

Under special circumstances at the discretion of the Head Teacher leave may be authorised. The school will consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence and at the discretion of the Head Teacher. The school will consider:

* The nature of the event
* Its frequency
* Whether the parent gave advance notice
* The pupil’s overall attendance pattern

Parents school request a form from the school office (see Appendix 3).

**5.3 Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

* Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
* Truancy before or during the school day
* Absences which have never been properly explained
* Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

1. **Sanctions**

**6.1 Continued Absence Issues**

Where the unauthorised absence appears to be a problem with a particular pupil, the school will:

* Contact parents to alert them to concerns regarding the attendance of a pupil
* Invite parents to an attendance meeting in school to discuss any problems and to set targets to improve a pupil’s attendance
* Request support from the Education Welfare Service when necessary

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving any problems. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer.

Parents should be aware that any type of absence will have a negative effect upon a child’s progress at school and be reflected in their attendance record. All absences will be considered to be unauthorised until parents provide a reason to justify the absence that is accepted by the school. The school has a responsibility to report any unauthorised absences to The Local Authority who have powers to ensure that children attend school.

*Following government guidelines, parents and carers can be prosecuted for irregular attendance and unauthorised absences and fined up to a maximum of £2500 or 3 months imprisonment. The Education Welfare Service now issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) following periods of unauthorised absence or truancy sweeps. The FPN is £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid before 28 days from the date of issue. Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings.*

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

**6.2 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

* The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
* One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays/extended leave taken in term time without permission
* Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Following DFE guidelines, school will apply for an Attendance Penalty Notice should, despite support from school and external agencies, a pupil’s unacceptable attendance continues. This legal process will result in parents being summoned to attend Magistrate’s Court and if a parent is found guilty, they will be prosecuted.

**6.3 Removal of a Pupil from the School Roll**

Should a child be removed from the school roll, it is the parent’s responsibility to contact the Local Authority to secure a school place. The pupil will not necessarily be placed back in to the school from which he/she has been taken off roll.

1. **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The school will promote the benefits of good attendance and punctuality to school through:

* Whole school displays
* Assemblies
* Weekly letters to parents
* Class learning
* Awards e.g. weekly trophy, Attendance Race Track, end of term celebrations, supermarket vouchers, certificates, stickers, book vouchers.

1. **Attendance monitoring**

**8.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

* Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
* Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

**8.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

* Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
* Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

**8.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

* Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
* Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

**8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

* Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
* Send letters to parents/carers reminding them of the importance of good attendance and outlining the next steps if the attendance of their child does not improve (see Appendices 4-8)
* Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
* Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Add anything else that is part of your strategy

**Appendix 1**

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **/** | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| **\** | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| **L** | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **B** | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| **D** | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **J** | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| **P** | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| **V** | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| **W** | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **E** | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| **H** | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| **Z** | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

***Appendix 2***

*17 April 2023*

Dear Parent / Guardian  
  
**Eid Celebrations at Dale**As Eid approaches, we would like to wish families who celebrate it a very happy holiday!  
  
Parents are advised that they can have 1 day authorised holiday for each religious observance, if Eid falls during the school week e.g. Monday – Friday.  
  
Pupils who take time off school for Eid will need to complete the leave of absence slip and return it to school before the day in order to have the leave authorised.  
  
Yours sincerely

**Mrs Louise Foster  
Head Teacher**

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Eid April 2023 Arrangements – Please return to the School Office**

My child will be celebrating Eid on……………………………………………. (Insert Date)

Child’s name.............................................................................. Class.................................

Parent/Guardian signature: ………………………………………….Date: ……………………

***Appendix 3***

**Application for Leave of Absence**

|  |
| --- |
| **Important Information for Parents / Guardians**  Please refer to the School Attendance Policy when requesting leave of absence. Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence unless there are explicit exceptional circumstances. |

Name of child …………………………………………………………………. Class ………….

Name of parent ………………………………………………………………

Telephone number ………………………………………………………….

Dates of proposed absence: From ……………………… To ………………………

Reason for Proposed Exceptional Circumstances

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Total days requested …………

***Appendix 4***

Parent / Guardian of:

NAME  
ADDRESS  
DERBY  
POSTCODE

DATE

Dear Parent / Guardian of:   
  
We are concerned about your child’s attendance at school. Poor attendance will have an impact upon learning as it is very difficult for children to catch up on lost learning time and so they will make slower progress than their peers.  
  
All children are expected to achieve an attendance level of at least 95%. Unfortunately, …………….’s attendance is currently …%.

Any child who falls below 90% is classed as a persistent absentee and may be referred to our Education Welfare Officer, Paul Johnson.

We shall continue to monitor and review your child’s attendance. Please remember to keep us informed of any absence by telephone call or letter.  
  
Yours sincerely

**Louise Foster  
Head Teacher**

***Appendix 5***

Parent / Guardian of:

NAME  
ADDRESS  
DERBY  
POSTCODE

DATE

Dear Parent / Guardian of:   
  
Further to our letter sent on ………………… we still have concerns about ……………’s attendance.

…………………’s attendance has not improved and is currently … %.

We will now be referring your child to our Educational Welfare Officer Paul Johnson, who will be monitoring the attendance until there is an improvement.

Yours sincerely

**Louise Foster  
Head Teacher**

***Appendix 6***

Parent / Guardian of:

NAME  
ADDRESS  
DERBY  
POSTCODE

DATE

Dear Parent / Guardian of:   
  
We are concerned about your child’s attendance at school.

………………………..’s attendance is currently ….. %.

Our Education Welfare Officer Paul Johnson has reviewed your child’s attendance and has highlighted a high number of absences due to illness. As from the date of this letter, no more absences will be authorised without medical proof e.g. a doctor’s letter.

INSERT PATTERNS (Herringbone)

We are able to administer medicine in school including Calpol should your child need it.

I have enclosed a Medication Administration letter that you will need to return to the School Office along with any medication.

We shall continue to monitor and review your child’s attendance until there has been an improvement.

Yours sincerely

**Louise Foster  
Head Teacher**

***Appendix 7***

MR AND MRS  
ADDRESS  
DERBY  
POSTCODE

DATE

Dear

**Unauthorised Leave of absence for DATE-to-DATE 2019**

**RE: NAME: D.O.B:**

We are aware that your child was absent from school on **DATE** and we have reason to believe they were on holiday.

In accordance with School Attendance policy this absence will be recorded as unauthorised as it does not meet the criteria for ‘exceptional circumstances’.

All unauthorised absences are reported to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice.

* Fines apply per parent per child.
* Payment is £120 if paid within 28 Days – reduced to £60 if paid within 21 Days.
* If not paid the matter will be placed before the Court.

If ………………….. does not return to Dale School by …………… 2019, he/she may be taken off roll.

Yours sincerely

**Louise Foster**

**Head Teacher**

***Appendix 8***

MR AND MRS  
ADDRESS  
DERBY  
POSTCODE

DATE

Dear

**RE: NAME: D.O.B:**

**Name** has been absent from Dale Community Primary School since **DATE.** School cannot make contact with any family member. The Education Welfare Officer has made a home visit and no contact was made.

In accordance with School Attendance policy this absence will be recorded as unauthorised as it does not meet the criteria for ‘exceptional circumstances’.

All unauthorised absences are reported to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice.

* Fines apply per parent per child.
* Payment is £120 if paid within 28 Days – reduced to £60 if paid within 21 Days.
* If not paid the matter will be placed before the Court.

We look forward to seeing …………….. in school on ………………………… 2019.

Should ………….. not return on that date, ………… is at risk of losing ……… place at Dale Primary School.

Yours sincerely

**Louise Foster**

**Head Teacher**