



Duckmanton Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

1	Summary	Attendance and Punctuality
2	Responsible person	Mrs Emma Levers
3	Accountable SLT member	Mrs Emma Levers
4	Applies to	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All staff <input type="checkbox"/> Support staff <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching staff
5	Who has overseen development of this policy	Mrs Emma Levers Mrs Dawn Musson
6	Who has been consulted and recommended policy for approval	Governors Parents/Carers DFE / Derbyshire County Council
7	Approved by and date	September 2024
8	Version number	2

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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.

At Duckmanton Primary School we apply the DFE and Derbyshire Local Authority guidance for attendance. Links to these documents can be found in the appendix.

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:

- Raise the awareness of good attendance
- Support stakeholders to understand the negative impact that poor attendance can have
- Make clear the school expectations regarding attendance

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- Provide clarity of processes and procedures related to attendance

Procedures

Good attendance and punctuality are important. It enables teaching and learning time to be maximised and ensures that each child receives a full curriculum entitlement. The school aims to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating a policy within which staff, pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership.

The school monitors attendance and punctuality and addresses identified problems.

It is important that there are clear procedures with regard to these two issues.

Attendance

- It is the parent/carers legal responsibility to ensure their child/children attend school regularly. The school has a responsibility to do all that it can to ensure this happens.
- By accepting a place at Duckmanton Primary School , parents and carers agree follow this policy.
- Good attendance of all children, regardless of their age and stage of development, is expected.
- It is our collective responsibility to impress on the children and parent/carers that regular attendance is important.

Communication

Attendance has a high profile and good attendance is communicated in a variety of ways:

1. The monthly newsletter reminds parents of the importance of good attendance. The current attendance % and school attendance target is communicated through this.
2. Details of the consequences of taking leave in term time that has not been authorised are shared through our newsletter
3. Promotional material and letters stressing the importance of good attendance are sent regularly by the attendance team.
4. Generic and targeted texts and dojo messages are sent to parents.
5. Attendance information is displayed on the school notice board (main entry to the school) and on the internal phase Brill boards. This is updated weekly
6. Attendance is discussed with pupils each week during celebration assembly, led by the Headteacher
7. The student council present attendance information to classes each year and support attendance assemblies.
8. Attendance has a high profile in any communication with parents. Good attendance is stressed by the Headteacher and attendance team at admissions and new starter meetings.

Rewards

1. Any class which receives 100% attendance will have a spin of the wheel and win a prize
2. The class with the highest attendance during the week wins the school Tiger teddy.
3. The class with the highest overall attendance is awarded with a prize every half term (approx. 6-7 weeks)
4. Certificates (bronze, silver, gold) are awarded each term for good and improved attendance.
5. At the end of the year, children who achieve 100% attendance for the year are celebrated.
6. Children who have achieved 100% throughout their time at Duckmanton receive a reward at the end of year 6.

Support

- Class teachers and support staff encourage good attendance and support children through praise and individualised support, based on the child's needs.
- The school attendance team are on hand each day to support parents and carers. This may include, but is not exhaustive, home visits, support for parents with routines, referrals to external agencies and meetings.
- Mrs Musson is our School Inclusion Support Assistant, and is responsible for attendance visits. Mrs Musson and Mrs Collins are our Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour support workers who, along with the safeguarding team, are responsible for supporting children.
- The attendance team can also help transport pupils to school when parents are unable to, due to personal circumstances. This is dependent on capacity and availability.
- The school accesses the statutory support provided by the Education Welfare Service.
- Attendance support plans can be created with parents, which detail barriers and support

School Routines

- The school gates open at 8.45am and close at 8.55am
- Each morning the class teacher should complete the class register by 9.00am.
- Each day the attendance team will create an 'evacuation register' from RM, which displays the children absent from school.
- The team will check school dojo and the office telephone system for messages regarding absence. They will then visit every class to check accuracy of the register and absence.
- The school MIS is then updated with notes and codings for absence are entered.
- The attendance team will decide whether any actions are required, such as:
 - ✓ Phone call home to check on the welfare of the child and offer support to parents
 - ✓ Home visit
 - ✓ Referral to a safeguarding lead

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- ✓ Referral to an external agency such as EWO, safeguarding team
 - The attendance team ensure that letters and referrals are recorded.
 - Regular patterns of 'unauthorised absence' are picked up by the attendance team and brought to the attention of the Headteacher, who will then decide if a letter requesting parents to come into school is appropriate. Copies of any letters sent will be kept on file.
 - Children who are 'persistently absent' (attendance is 90% or lower) or those identified as 'vulnerable' will receive a phone call or home visit by their key worker or a member of the attendance team, whilst absent. The phone call aims to support the child back to school.
 - On the 3rd day of absence for all other children, the attendance team will contact the parent by phone or through a home visit, to offer further support, unless it is deemed that this is not required.
 - Each fortnight the attendance team meet to review school attendance data.
 - During the meeting the team decide whether further communication or support is required for children, parents and carers.
 - During this meeting requests for holidays in term time are considered; letters, EPN warnings and fines are actioned.
 - Every fortnight the attendance team meet to review PA and attendance data and statistics. This is attended by the Headteacher
 - Telephone, written and verbal messages are recorded on RM.
 - A home visit to all children who are absent following a school holiday will be made, regardless of whether a reason for absence has been given.

Reporting absences

- All absence from school must be explained by written, verbal or telephone message from the parent/carer. Contact through the school dojo attendance group is encouraged.
- Communication must take place on the first day of absence. Parents must provide an update every 2 days, unless longer is agreed by the attendance team.
- First day absence – if contact is not made by the parent by 9.30am to report their child absent, a text message will be sent by the office to request that contact is made. If the parent has not made contact by 10.30am, a phone call/home visit will be made. The aim to make contact before the end of the day.
- If contact has not been made on day 1, a home visit/phone call will be made every day until contact is made.
- At day 10 of no contact, if the whereabouts of the child is unknown, the child will be reported as missing in education.

Authorising absences

- Only the Head of School or a member of the Senior Leadership Team can authorise absences or send a child home who is ill.

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- The Department for Education expects the school to make a common-sense judgement.
 - Children should only be absent from school if they are ill or if a medical or dental appointment cannot be obtained out of school hours. However, only a reasonable amount of time will be authorised for the appointment.
 - Depending on the time of the appointment, the child is expected to attend school before/after the appointment.
 - They should not be absent for birthdays, shopping trips or hair appointments etc.
 - When a parent has received a 2nd attendance letter (letter 2), absence will not be authorised (unless exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Headteacher). Parent will be expected to provide a medical note to support any absence.
 - Absence not reasonably explained by parents/carers is unauthorised and will be followed up by the school.

Concerning or unexplained absences

- When we are unclear about the reason for absence, the parent or carer will be contacted by phone or through a home visit.
- If the attendance team are unable to make contact with the parent or carer, a message or letter will be left.
- If the school believes that a child is on holiday, and parents/carers have not informed the school of this, a home visit will be conducted. If we are unable to make contact with the child or parent, a letter will be left, requesting that the parent makes contact with the school within 24 hours. If contact is not made, the school will assume that the child is on holiday and a fine may result.

Home visits

- Home visits will be made by a member of the Attendance Team or Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- A lone working risk assessment is in place
- The member of staff conducting the home visit will ensure that that a member of the administration team is aware of the home visits he/she is making, informing them of their exit and return to school.
- If there is no answer when the welfare team visits; a letter is left asking the parent to contact school as soon as possible. If necessary a second visit will be made by the attendance team.
- Two members of staff will sometimes make a joint visit. Safeguarding of staff is also paramount and therefore sometimes home visits cannot take place.
- Aggression towards any member of staff visiting homes will not be tolerated and further action may result.
- A home visit will be made for all children who are absent following a school holiday. This is because historically we have received inaccurate reasons from parents for their child's absence.

Children under legal school age

- All parents are informed of the expected level of attendance.
- Poor attendance in our NEST or Nursery could result in the child's place being withdrawn.

Child missing in education (CME)

- Due to the recommendations in the Working Together to Safeguard Children documentation our welfare team will visit all children if they are absent and:
 - The parent/carer has not informed us of the absence
 - The child is classed as vulnerable or PA and has been absent for 3 days or more
- If we are not able to ascertain the location of a child for 10 days, a CME referral will be made.

Induction

- Pupils and their families are invited to visit the school, prior to admission to the EYFS unit.

Pupils moving from other schools

- Pupil information must be completed, prior to formally starting at the school
- A meeting will be held between a member of SLT and the parent/carer and child before the child is formally admitted to the school.
- During this meeting information about the child will be recorded. This will be shared with the class teacher, if the child is admitted to the school.
- Prior to the child being formally admitted to the school, the previous school will be contacted by the Inclusion Team to obtain key information.
- The administration team will arrange a meeting in the first 2 weeks of the child being admitted to discuss the school's services and how the child has settled in.
- Pupils are given classroom buddies by their class teacher.

Pupils leaving this school

- When a child leaves our school, the administrative team will request the new home address (if applicable) and which school they have requested.
- The receiving school should inform us once the child has started at their school.
- All records will be sent within 7 days of the child starting at the new school.

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 an **Application for Leave of Absence in Term Time form**, available from the school office and handed in 4 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).
- We apply the Derbyshire Local Authority and the DFE Working Together to improve school attendance statutory guidance to manage attendance.
- When the decision is made, parents are informed of the outcome by letter.
- The electronic registers are marked accordingly.
- When it is suspected that a child is on holiday, but the school has not been informed, a home visit will be carried out by the attendance team. If the attendance team are unable to speak with the child during this visit, a letter will be left. It will be assumed that the child is on holiday. The absence will be unauthorised and a fine may result.
- In a year there are 175 non school days. We encourage parents to use these days for holidays, not term time.

Attendance Registers

- The class register is a legal document and the responsibility for ensuring that it is marked correctly lies with the class teacher.
- At the start of the Autumn term and during induction, all new staff are briefed on how to complete the register.
- Registration is held first thing in a morning and after lunch and consists of a roll call and head count.
- Pupils are marked present with a (/) for present or (N) for absent..

Punctuality

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and is on time. School register close half an hour after the start of the session. Lateness is logged on RM Integris.

Our sessions are:

Gates open: 8.45am

Gates close: 8.55am

Registers completed by: 9.00am

Class attendance checks completed by: 9.30am

Absence messages sent by: 10am

Lateness procedure

- The school gate opens at 8.45am
- Children and parents have until 8.55am to enter through the top gate (Y1 – Y6)
- The gate is closed at 8.55am. Any child arriving after 8.55am is late and must enter and register at the school office.
- Children arriving after 8.55am but before 9.25am will be marked by the office staff as L (late before registers have closed).
- If a child arrives after 9.25am, this will be recorded as U (unauthorised absence).
- If a pattern of lateness is identified, the attendance team will invite the parent/carer in to discuss the problem.
- The teachers, administration and attendance team are responsible for ensuring that daily registers are coded correctly. The administration and attendance team work collaboratively to send out letters on behalf of the Headteacher to parents/carers regarding attendance and lateness.

Target Setting

Our school is working towards the following targets:

- Target for punctuality - to reduce lateness to nil.
- Target for attendance - to improve to 96+%
- Target for Persistent absence – less than 10%

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

- This policy and its contents are monitored and evaluated annually internally by the designated person who sets the targets (Headteacher).
- Further evaluation takes place termly by the Governors.
- They are informed about attendance levels.

National framework for penalty notices

The new 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.

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.

Appendix

[School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)