Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body. Written by P Dewes.	Date: September 2023
Last reviewed on:	September 2023	
Next review due by:	September 2024	

Contents

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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 in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 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. 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

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

> Sumamry of where a mental health issue is affecting attendance https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1136965/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

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 Principal and Senior Leader in charge of Attendance to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school
> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school
> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
> Having an oversight of data analysis
> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr P Dewes and can be contacted via 01604 460004

3.4 The Educational Welfare officers / WPA Education Welfare Services

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal
> Working with education welfare officers and the WPA EWO to tackle persistent absence
> Advising the Principal / Vice Principal (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The staff involved within attendance are :

- o Primary Phase – A Gilbride and D Martin
- o Secondary Phase - Mrs A Boddington, Miss S Collins, Mrs S Wass and Mrs H Maddox
- o WPA - Mrs T Coare

3.5 SENDCO

> Support the school in giving attendance a high profile

> Support the Pastoral Teams for both primary and secondary phase to ensure that procedures are followed in their year groups by offering advice as appropriate

> Liaise with external and internal agencies to ensure that SEND pupils and parents/carers are given relevant support to improve their attendance

> Attend meetings for pupils with Education Health Care Plan as requested by Heads of Year or the Attendance Officer

3.6 Key Stage Team (secondary phase, Assistant and Vice Principal)

> Support the school in giving attendance a high profile

> Support the Pastoral Teams with the secondary phase (for respective Key Stages) to ensure that procedures are followed and offering advice as appropriate

> Liaise with external and internal agencies to ensure that Pupil Premium pupils and parents/carers are given relevant support to improve their attendance

3.7 Class teachers/form tutors

> Responsible for recording daily attendance marks to lessons on a daily basis

> Responsible for recording am tutor marks on a daily basis

> Close liaison with the Education Welfare Officers to return any letters sent to parents

> Speaking to pupils regarding attendance

3.8 School Behavioral Administrators / administrative staff

> Responsible for supporting the Educational Welfare Officers in role

> Supporting attendance during home visits

3.9 Directors of Year and Assistant Directors of Year (secondary phase) / Head of School and Deputy Head of School (primary phase)

> Directs actions for attendance concerns in conjunction with the schools 5 staged approach

> Monitors attendance data across respective year groups and at an individual pupil level

> Reports concerns around attendance to the Senior Leadership Team

> Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

3.9a Parents

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day including all timetabled lessons on time

> Report any absences before 9.00am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

> Contacting the school

  o Reporting absence via class charts is the most efficient way to report absences. This can be completed via the app or via web browser with login details that are provided to parents. If you require help with this please contact the school.

> 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

3.9b Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time and ensure each lesson is attended on time.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance registers daily. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> For pupils of compulsory school age, 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 after the date on which the entry was made.

Within the primary phase of the school, pupils should arrive by 9.00am. There is a flexible drop off time between 8.45am and 9.00am for all year groups. Primary pupils will be marked late if they arrive after 9.10am. Pupils will be marked as U if they arrive after 9.30am.

In the secondary phase pupils must be with their form tutor and in school by 8.40am on each school day. Within the secondary phase the register for the first session will be open from 8.45am to 9.00am. AM registration will close at 9.30am. After this point pupils will be marked as U (arrived in school after registration closed, unauthorised absence).

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 8.15am or as soon as practically possible by reporting absence through classcharts, emailing the attendance staff or calling the correct phase of the school (see also section 7).

If a student is not in school they must have a justified reason given by an adult (one with parental responsibility) that represents them. We ask parents to arrange medical appointments out of school hours.

Absence should continue to be reported on a daily basis unless a medical note is supplied stating the period of absence which can then be approved by the school.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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 an exceptional leave of absence is required, this should be accessed via the school website

Exceptional Leave of Absence Request

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

Parents will be contacted within the primary phase if repeated lateness occurs. Secondary pupils will be placed in a same day detention for 20 minutes if they arrive late for school. Repeated lateness will result in an escalation of sanction.

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:

> Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason. Parents will receive a text message / email or phone call regarding unreported absences to school on any given day.

> Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

> 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

- o Day 1 of absence – contacting home
- o Day 2 of absence – Follow up phone call
- o Day 3 of absence – Writing to parents
- o Day 4 of continued absence – Revisit of all points in preparation for a home visit
- o Day 5 of continued absence – Home visit, referral of pupil and family to Childrens Services
- o Day 6 to 9 of continued absence – Continuation of making contact
- o Day 10 of continued absence – Child missing from Education

If the student has been absent for 10 consecutive days and no update provided to school in all the steps

above the child will be referred to 'Children Missing in Education' to Northamptonshire West Local Authority and removed from the school roll. No child is removed from the school roll without first notifying the local authority and receiving their approval. For children where there are concerns regarding wellbeing or welfare, or for children who are subject to any safeguarding plan, we may conduct further home visits at any time to ensure that the child remains safe.

TDS follows the LA Good Practice Guidance for Identifying and Safeguarding Children Missing from Education (CME). In line with these processes and following the statutory guidance set out in DFE 2016 we are in regular contact with the LA and provide them with information on changes to the roll as required. No child is removed from the school roll without first notifying the local authority and receiving their approval. Information on transferring files is contained within the Safeguarding and CP policy. In line with practices agreed with the LA and the guidance first set out in DFE-00261-2016 'Children Missing Education' (September 2016), the Attendance Officer will inform the LA of any student who has been absent from school for 10 consecutive days to report the student as missing from education. In addition, the attendance officer will inform the Designated Safeguard Lead. The DSL will then make an assessment of the child's vulnerability and, where appropriate, a referral to social care for that child. A Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting will be arranged by the DSL, if appropriate, in case of continued non-attendance. Appropriate staff will be informed of the outcome of the meeting by email from the Attendance Officer.

Penalty Notices

Continuous absences will affect a student's overall attendance. When attendance falls below 85% (with 50% or more of the absences being recorded as unauthorised for any 6-week period, our procedures for persistent absence will be followed. This could result in parent(s)/carer(s) being issued with a Penalty Notice and further legal action.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be in the form of a letter to parents explaining how to access attendance records on classcharts and what good attendance looks like.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principals discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013 state that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Principal will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.

2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form. (Available on the school website Exceptional Leave of Absence Request) Requests cannot be made orally.

3. This must include the reason why parents/carers feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to the applying parent/carer within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 60 days or £120 thereafter, per parent per child.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents 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 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 Principal, 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 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At The Duston School we expect excellent attendance to school. When pupils have consistently high levels of attendance we celebrate this in various ways.

> Pupils receive x10 house points for 100% attendance in a half term

- Pupils receive x10 house points for 0 lates within in a half term
- Pupils receive x50 house points for 100% attendance in a whole academic year
- Pupils receive x50 house points for 0 lates within in a whole academic year
- Celebration of good attendance within assemblies with the rewarding of amazon vouchers for good attendance
- Attendance statistics contributing towards the end of academic year achievement trip.
- Letters will be sent home to celebrate an array of different attendance achievements. This includes celebrating improved attendance with pupils who have previously struggled to achieve 96% attendance.
- Year 11 pupils who achieve 96% attendance will have priority access to Prom tickets
- Year 13 pupils who achieve 96% attendance will have priority access to Prom tickets

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor pupils who have three separate occasions of absence in one term that are not authorised
- 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.

7.2 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to key staff 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

7.4 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

> Hold regular meetings with the parents 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

In order to improve attendance, we aim to work with external partners and families in order to treat the root cause of poor attendance. We will analyse attendance data and implement the following:

Each pupils attendance percentage will contribute towards the actions listed below.

1. **Stage 1 – Monitoring (Educational Administration Coordinator)**
   More than 10 sessions of absence (5 days)

2. **Stage 2 – Attendance Surgery (EWO)**
   More than 20 sessions of absence (10 days)

3. **Stage 3 – Parent Contract (EWO)**
   More than 30 sessions of absence (15 days)

4. **Stage 4 – WPA / Local Authority (WPA)**
   More than 40 sessions of absence (20 days)

5. **Stage 5 – Legal Proceedings – Formalised Support and Intervention**

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum be reviewed annually by Mr P Dewes, Vice Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

Breakdown of available codes

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	A leave of absence for a family holiday is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.

R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.
<td colspan="3">The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.</td>		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
<td colspan="3">These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.</td>		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early

		years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the school. It can also be used where the pupil is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to your attendance figures.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.
The codes below should only be used to record attendance for the Spring term 2022 and prior.		
X01	Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to be in school	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
X02	Self-isolating COVID-19 symptoms	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. Students self-isolating because they have symptoms of coronavirus but they have not yet had a positive test.
X05	Quarantine requirement	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. Student required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK.
X06	Shielding	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. Students who have been identified as clinically vulnerable and advised that they should not attend school.
X07	Government attendance restrictions	This code maps to the statutory mark of X. To be used for national restrictions to education settings in line with Government advice.
X08	Advised by Public Health Directors not to attend school	To be used for local restrictions to education settings in line with advice from Directors of Public Health.
X09	NHS test and trace required self-isolation	The student is required to self-isolate due to contact with a confirmed case, by NHS test and trace.