

THE DUSTON SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved by: Principal, Mr S Strickland

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THE
DUSTON TDS
SCHOOL 4-19

www.thedustonschool.org

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality to school and lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust Board:

The Trustee's are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Holding the Principal and Attendance Champions to account for the implementation of this policy. The linked trustee for this area is Vicky Lupton.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- The 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, and/or authorising Attendance Champions to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance

The designated senior leaders (also known as the 'Senior Attendance Champions') are responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are Mr P. Dewes (Vice Principal), Mrs S. Pragnell (Assistant Principal for Primary) and Miss G. Perry (Assistant Principal) and can be contacted via 01604 460004.]

3.4 The Attendance team/ WPA Education Welfare Services

The Educational Welfare officers will:

- 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 WPA Education Welfare Services/Local Authority School Attendance Support Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal/Attendance Champions (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Overseeing the organisation of all home visits in line with our safeguarding approach
- Attend School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) meetings on a half-termly basis

The staff involved with attendance are:

- Primary Phase – Mrs S Webb
- Secondary Phase – Mr L Payne (School's Transition Co-ordinator), Miss S Collins (Educational Welfare Officer – KS4), (Educational Support Administrator – KS3), Mrs A Boddington (Educational Support Administrator – KS3), Miss H Maddox (Educational Support Administrator – KS4) and Mrs T Ward (KS5 -Deputy Sixth Form Manager)
- WPA Education Welfare Services – Miss T Coare and Miss K Green

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance registers on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information via Class Charts. Form tutors should liaise with Primary Admin (Mrs S Webb)/ Educational Support Administrator (KS3 and KS4)/ Sixth form Study Support Manager (KS5), for example, passing information that parents have given to the class teacher/form tutor.

3.6 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Pick up any communication from parents/carers regarding absence that have not gone through to the Primary Admin (Mrs S Webb)/Attendance team on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the relevant members of staff where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 SENDCO

- Support the school in giving attendance a high profile
- Support the Pastoral Teams 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 an Education Health Care Plan

3.8 Key Stage Team (Secondary Phase, Assistant and Vice Principal)

- Support the school in giving attendance a high profile
- Support the Pastoral Teams within the secondary phase to ensure that procedures are followed and offer 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
- Attend School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) meetings on a half-termly basis

3.9 Directors of Year and Assistant Directors of Year (Secondary Phase) / Head of School and Deputy Head of School (Primary Phase)

- Direct actions for attendance concerns in conjunction with the school's five staged approach (secondary)
- Monitors attendance data across respective year groups and at an individual pupil level weekly
- Report concerns around attendance to the Senior Leadership Team
- Work with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

3.10 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report their child's absence before 08.15am on the day of the absence via Class Charts and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child and inform the school via office@thedustonschool.org of any changes to contact details including addresses
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. If you need to take your child out for an appointment during the school day you will need to upload evidence of the appointment to Class Charts.
- Keep to any attendance contracts that are agreed on with the school and/or local authority
- Engage with the school and to action any attendance strategies needed to support the child

3.11 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 electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Within the primary phase of the school, pupils must arrive by 9.00am on each school day. 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 9.15am. 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 must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08.15am or as soon as practically possible, and each subsequent day of absence, by reporting the absence through Class Charts.

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, there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness or at the discretion of the attendance team, the school can ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence including:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered.
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital Consultant or Psychologist.
- Evidence of a consultation with NHS 111.
- Medication prescribed by a GP.
- Copy of a prescription.
- Print screen of medical notes.
- Letters concerning hospital appointments.
- Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by the receptionist.
- Screen shot of text message confirming GP/hospital appointment.
- Screen shot of the GP/hospital sign in screen confirming the appointment.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

We are unable to accept images of children's ailments, images of thermometers or non-prescribed medication as forms of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

As a school we automatically approve the first 5 absences due to illness in the Primary Phase and the first 3 absences due to illness in the Secondary phase.

4.3 Planned absence

If an exceptional leave of absence is required, this should be accessed via the school website (see link below) and submitted to office@thedustonschool.org

[Exceptional Leave of Absence Request](#)

However, we encourage parents 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 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.

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience arranged by the local authority or school as part of the pupil's education.
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

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 the escalation of sanction which can be found below.

- 1 late to school within a week = 20-minute same day detention
- 2 lates to school within a week = 40-minute detention on the same day as the pupil accrued the second late
- 3 lates to school within a week = 60-minute detention on the same day as the pupil accrued the third late
- 4 lates to school within a week = 90-minute SLT detention

In addition to the above, there is also an escalated late to school procedure, detailed below.

- **Arrival once Year Group line up has finished to 9:00 am:** 20-minute same-day detention.
- **Arrival between 9:00 am and 9:30 am:** 40-minute same-day detention
- **Arrival between 9:30 am and 10:00 am:** 60-minute same-day detention
- **Arrival after 10:00 am:** 60 minute same-day detention plus a 90-minute Senior Leadership detention (Thursdays)

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 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 home visit or contact the police. This is to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
 - Day 1 of absence – contacting home
 - Day 2 of absence – Follow up phone call
 - Day 3 of absence – Writing to parents
 - Day 4 of continued absence – Revisit of all points in preparation for a home visit
 - Day 5 of continued absence – Home visit, referral of pupil and family to Children's Services
 - Day 6 to 9 of continued absence – Continuation of making contact
 - Day 10 of continued absence – Child missing from Education
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer and/or social worker.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school encourages parents to regularly monitor their child's attendance through Class Charts.

For queries about attendance please email attendance@thedustonschool.org and parents/carers will receive a reply within two working days.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Principal will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited phased-return timetable approved by the school
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances which are reviewed on an individual basis. An exceptional circumstance is for example, a religious observance.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via [Exceptional Leave of Absence Request](#).

The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If a pupil is over compulsory school age (e.g. sixth form), leave can be requested or agreed by the pupil or a parent they normally live with.

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 working days.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include,

A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine without further reference to you for a penalty notice this warning is valid for 12 months.

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Penalty Notices

The Principal (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At The Duston School we expect excellent attendance to school (96% is the minimum aim of all pupils). When pupils have consistently high levels of attendance we celebrate this in various ways. Pupils must attend school no less than 90% of the time within a period of 10 weeks. Attendance that falls lower than this is classed as irregular.

Pupils receive x10 house points for 96% attendance in a half term

Pupils receive x10 house points for 0 lates within a half term

Pupils receive x50 house points for 96% attendance in a whole academic year

Celebration of good attendance within assemblies with the rewarding of amazon vouchers for good attendance as well as priority access to the canteen and snack shack.

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 97% 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. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Specific targeted support for primary phase pupils can be chosen, but not limited to, the list below and will be considered on an individual basis across all phases of the school:

- Offer the family an EHA where applicable
- Listen to and discuss barriers to attendance – make any relevant referrals for further professional specialist support, for example, MHST
- Any interventions needed; for example meet and greet, slightly later drop off or collection time, timetable adjustments, buddy system, any interventions/adaptations needed in lessons etc.
- If medical, work with the family and health professionals, risk assessments etc.

Each case would be reviewed on an individual basis and would be relevant to that pupil.

Pupils who have complex barriers to attendance within the secondary phase will be supported through the following strategies:

- Form tutor intervention
- DOY/ADOY intervention
- Senior leadership intervention

Specific targeted support can be chosen, but not limited to, the list below and will be considered on an individual basis:

➤ Stage one monitoring

- Tutor weekly monitoring of progress
- Return to school conversation from tutor
- Home visits if required
- Education Admin to be made aware of pupil for monitoring
- Incentive programme
- Website support for parental guidance
- PSHE and Character curriculum for resilience, aspiration, and respect
- Additional assembly / line up key messages / theme
- Safeguarding concern opened for weekly check.
- Guidance to attend Extra-Curricular clubs
- Detentions (if required)

➤ Stage two attendance surgery

Specific targeted support can be chosen, but not limited to, the list below and will be considered on an individual basis:

- All fixed points at **Stage 1, including optional points**
- Name raised at attendance meeting with EWO / DoY / ADoY / Primary staff
- Home visits by Attendance team.
- Legal possibilities made clear through communication with home
- PIC referral: including counselling referral if required
- Safeguarding concern opened for weekly check.
- In house SEND referral as appropriate and accommodations to suit SEND needs if appropriate
- WPA intervention could be used at this stage if deemed suitable
- Referral to **Stage 3**

➤ Stage three - Attendance Contract

Specific targeted support can be chosen, but not limited to, the list below and will be considered on an individual basis:

- All points at **Stage 1 & 2**
- Name raised at attendance meeting with VP attendance / Respective Key stage
- Legal possibilities made clear through communication with home
- Additional targeted support through PIC referral
- Additional external agency intervention (CAMHS, Service 6, school nurse)
- Signpost family to local charities to offer support
- In house SEND referral as appropriate
- Phased return (see steps)
- Offer an EHA if appropriate
- Referral to **Stage 4**

➤ Stage four – Local Authority intervention

Specific targeted support can be chosen, but not limited to, the list below and will be considered on an individual basis:

- All points at Stage 1, 2 & 3
- Family meeting to review Attendance contract.
- Legal proceedings
- SLT aware
- In house SEND referral as appropriate
- Additional Early help support
- Signpost family to local charities to offer support
- CAHMS referral
- Educational Psychologists referral
- Trustee's hearing
- Meeting around the child and family with the appropriate agencies
- Phased return (see steps)
- Referral to **Stage 5**

➤ Stage five – Formalised statutory legal intervention

School will work closely with the Local Authority to monitor attendance and reach out for reasons of absence.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.2 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a pupil is returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, they will be offered personalised support through PIC or a phased-return timetable agreed by the school.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. This data will be used to implement stage processes for individuals.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system, as per the 2024 guidance, so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance.
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of weekly, half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- 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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers (primary)/form tutors (secondary), to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

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:

1. Stage 1 – Monitoring
2. Stage 2 – Attendance Surgery (EWO/WPA)
3. Stage 3 – Attendance Contract (EWO/WPA)
4. Stage 4 – WPA / Local Authority (WPA)
5. Stage 5 – Legal Proceedings – Formalised Support and Intervention

Each pupil's attendance percentage will contribute towards the actions listed below.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action

The Duston School can engage WPA services at any stage of the attendance process. WPA are an external impartial service to help support and promote good attendance.

9. Monitoring arrangements

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

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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
E1	Internal isolation	See behaviour policy
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school and supervised by a member of school staff.
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by

	regulated employment abroad	the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ with no fixed abode, who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at

		school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes

O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session (please see section 4.1)
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays