



Deanwood Primary School

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Policy Scope: Deanwood Primary School

Responsibility: Local Governing Body

Review Frequency: 3 years

Review Date: October 2026

The Governing Body of Deanwood Primary School adopted this policy in October 2023

Signed by D Giles, Chair of Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D Giles', with a horizontal line underneath.

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to

- Set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school
- Clarify the role of the parents/carers
- To ensure the regular attendance of pupils to allow them to receive their full educational entitlement.

Principles

- Regular and fulltime attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life
- It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of an absence
- The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality

The school will

- Provide details of the named attendance lead - Mrs J Wright Head of School
- Adhere to the latest Department for Education (DFE) guidance Working together to improve school attendance. (September 2022)
- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority;
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued;
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents;
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education;
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life;
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using a computer-based registration system, and absences are followed up promptly;
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc);
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence;
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents;
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs;
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality;
- Share good practice with other schools;
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence.

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Strategies to promote and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality

- All new parents are introduced to the policy and information on attendance in the school Prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website;
- The newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder;
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality;
- Reward classes, children and groups of children for high attendance.
- Maintain up to date records;
- Liaise with Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) during regular monitoring visits to identify attendance concerns.

We expect the parent to

- Provide up to date contact numbers and change of addresses;
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence;
- Telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing;
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed, in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return;
- Provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or the optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day;
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made;
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.
- Adhere to the Health Protection Agency's guidelines for schools which recommend that children remain absent from school for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.

The law

Your child must receive full-time education. As a parent or carer, you are responsible for making sure this happens. Irregular attendance will undermine your child's education. Statistics show that children who miss school can become victims of crime and some are drawn into anti-social behaviour. A low attendance rate will seriously slow down your child's educational progress; affect their learning and their friendships.

The School expects children's attendance to be at least 96%. A child with only 80% attendance is in effect having a day off a week and a child with less than 90% attendance is in effect having half a day off a week.

Penalty Notices and court action can be used if a child's attendance is low and despite the best efforts of the school and the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP), it does not improve.

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Authorised absence

Only the Head of School can authorise absence. He/She is not obliged to accept an explanation.

Absences will **not** be authorised if for example:

- Another member of the family is ill;
- The family have overslept or had a late night;
- There are problems with uniform or clothing;
- You have forgotten school dates;
- Your child attends a medical/dental appointment for more than half a day without written proof that this is necessary;
- There is an annual family event such as a birthday;
- You take your child shopping;
- There is bad weather (unless the school is officially closed);
- You have been away for the night/weekend and do not travel back in time;
- You cannot get your child to school.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Head of School on behalf of the Governing Body. If the Head of school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Holidays / Absence in Term time

There have been some changes made to the regulations around holidays being taken in term time and this section explains these changes.

The Department for Education (DfE) has amended the regulations governing requests for holidays in term time. With effect from 1st September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Headteachers **MAY NOT** grant any holidays or other absences during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Deanwood Primary School **WILL NOT** authorise any holiday or absence at all except in the event of exceptional circumstances. This must be agreed with the Head of School.

Should you choose to remove your child during term time without authorization you are not only disrupting your child's education but are also at risk of receiving a penalty fine.

From September 2013, the DfE has amended the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, so that any parent/carer in the household who receives a Penalty Notice for taking their child out of school during term time will have to pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

By law we are required to comply with these amendments to the regulations, which affect all absences from school during term time taken after 1st September 2013.

You can find out more about these new regulations by following the link below;
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

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Sanctions

Where absences are unauthorised:

- A referral can be made to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP), where legal actions may be necessary.
- Where 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) occur within a 6-week period a referral can be made to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) and an application for a Penalty Notice may be made.

The offence of non - school attendance is absolute, and the legal requirement regarding evidence is simply that the child did not attend.

£ 120 fine for each adult/carer in the household if paid within 28 days.

£ 60 fine for each adult/carer in the household if paid within 21 days.

Failure to pay will result in a summons to the magistrate court.

Punctuality

The school day begins at 8:30am and the register will be taken as soon as possible after this. Children arriving after 8:40am should report to the school office and will be given a late mark (Code L). Registers close at 9:10am and any child who arrives after this will be registered as an unauthorised late (Code U).

Afternoon registration will take place at 1pm for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 1:20pm for pupils in Key Stage 2. Children arriving after these times will be given a late mark (Code L). Registers close at 1:05pm for Key Stage 1 and 1:25pm for Key Stage 2 any child arriving after these times will be registered as an unauthorised late (Code U).

With the earlier finish time every Friday afternoon registration for Key Stage 2, will change to 1pm. Children in either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 on a Friday arriving after this time will be given a late mark (Code L). Registers will close at 1:05pm any child arriving after this time will be registered as an unauthorised late (Code U). Please note the school closes at 1:10pm to pupils. Childcare non-educational provisions are in place for working parents and remains available until 3:30pm, term time only.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply with them. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education, but also that of others in the class.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a letter will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of a situation, an arrangement allowing a degree of flexibility can be agreed with the Head of School.

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Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) and/or Social Services where relevant.

Medical Appointments

Parents must sign their child (ren) out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day. A log is kept for the purpose. Parents should come to the office, where the office staff will contact the classroom and ask that the child comes down to reception to meet their parent/carer.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Head of School.

Procedures for monitoring absence

- If no explanation of absence is received by 10:00am the office will either telephone home or send an Arbor absence message.
- Registers are checked daily and letters sent to parents on a weekly basis to ask for reasons for any unexplained absences.
- Attendance figures are checked each term by the Head of School along with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP). Letters will be sent alerting parents of pupils whose attendance has fallen below 96%.
- Attendance for these pupils will be monitored over the rest of the term.
- If their attendance does not improve significantly, a further letter will be sent, to advise at this stage no further authorised absences will be given without supporting medical evidence e.g. letter from hospital showing appointment or certificate from doctor.
- Should attendance still not improve, another letter will be sent inviting the parent to meet the Head of School along with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner AAP to discuss concerns and how to help make improvements - attendance clinic
- If no further improvement is seen following the attendance clinic, a formal referral to AAP will be made which may result in possible court action
- A Penalty Notice may be issued by Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies (AASSA) where a parent has caused **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 6 week period. This is equal to 5 days.** The sanction is £60.00 if paid within 21 days of issue, £120.00 if paid within 28 days of issue and an automatic referral to the Magistrates court if not paid.
Please note that a penalty notice is issued to both parents for each child - for example, a family of 2 children would incur 4 penalty notices.

Equal opportunities.

The school will consider religious and cultural diversity e.g. when using its discretion to authorise absence for religious holidays. A pupil's absence may be authorised on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the relevant religious body. Parents should give at least 2 weeks notice of these days.

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For requests that involve a holiday abroad, each case will be considered on its merits. A pupil may have family in another country and need to attend an important ceremony such as the funeral of a grandparent and the Head of School will exercise their

discretion in granting leave of absence. If a pupil does not return after the agreed time, any additional absence will be classed as unauthorised.