



DOGSTHORPE INFANT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Ratified by: Local Governing Body

Date: 25th March 2024

Minute: 10

Review Date: Annually in line with LA guidance

Welcome to our school family where children are...



inspired to dream and develop the building blocks to be independent, confident and inquisitive life-long learners.



nurtured, valued and individual differences are respected in an exciting, learning community where everyone belongs.



little stars who deserve to shine.

Policy Overview.

What is the policy for?

The policy is for parents/carers of children attending Dogsthorpe Infant School. The policy outlines the legal requirements regarding attendance.

Who has devised and contributed to this policy?

The policy is based on the Local Authority's Attendance policy dated September 2023 and has been developed by the Headteacher, Attendance Co-ordinator and Governors.

How will this policy be communicated?

The policy is available on the school website, My Concern and available in the school foyer.

How will this policy be monitored?

The Attendance Co-ordinator meets regularly with the Headteacher and reports half-termly to the SCAN Committee.

Governors monitor attendance through:

- Headteacher's half-termly Reports
- Governor monitoring visits/days.

Which other policies are linked to this policy?

All school Safeguarding Policies.

This policy meets the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Setting (2014)

Our School

Dogsthorpe Infant School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

Everyone - including pupils, parents and carers, all school staff, school governors, Local Authority, external agencies - has a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. We are committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies to achieve best outcomes for children via the early help pathways available.

We believe that ours is a successful, welcoming school which you and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Regular attendance is so important as it gives your child the best opportunity to learn. Any absences will affect the pattern of your child's schooling and consistent absences may seriously affect learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines, not only for your child but for others in the same class.

The school liaises closely with our Local Authority and other agencies using an Early Help pathway (Early Help Referral) which assists in the assessment of need in order for appropriate support to be given. This initial pathway enables further referrals to external agencies to be made and further support acquired to support families to remove any barriers that are preventing regular attendance.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Definition of a parent/carer in Education Law

It is important that schools and local authorities are aware that parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

For the purposes of education law, the department considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative.

- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

The Law relating to attendance and the right to a full-time education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’

It is the legal responsibility of **every** parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an **additional legal duty** to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case (2017) considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are determined by the school and are the days and hours that they are open for pupils to attend. Under this judgment all children registered at a school should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is **everyone’s responsibility** and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

Attendance	Anti-Bullying
Behaviour Management	Access to the Curriculum
Health and Safety	Wellbeing

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Creating and maintaining a pattern of punctual and regular attendance is **everybody’s** responsibility - parents/carers, pupils, school staff and, external agencies.

Reception Intake Induction period

Peterborough City Council in line with the Admissions Code, offer all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full-time place at school if requested by their parents/carers.

Our school uses a short induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education using a reduced timetable and to assist in their transition to full-time education. You will be notified of the timetable for our Reception children for September in advance. At our school all children are expected to be in school before the end of registration so that they are settled and ready to start the school day.

Expectations and Daily routines

Our school starts at 8.50am (doors open at 8.45am) and we expect all children to be in class by this time. Registers are marked at 9.00.am and close at 9.15am.

Your child will receive an unauthorised late mark if they arrive after the register is closed. Your child will be given a 'U' code (unauthorised late) in line with regulations, and this may mean that you face legal action if they persist.

When your child is late, they miss the start of the day, they can miss work, and this will impact on their learning. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons for other pupils in the class, which is not fair on them or your child.

Absence Procedure

If your child is going to be absent from school, you must contact the school on the first day and subsequent days of absence and inform the school the reason for the absence (unless it is a diagnosed medical condition and evidence is on file). You can do this several ways:

- telephone,
- email (office@dogsthorpeinfants.org.uk)
- calling into the school and speaking to a staff member

Please do not send absence messages via Class Dojo as this may not be picked up before the start of school.

If your child is absent and you do not contact us, we may, under our safeguarding policy:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day and every following day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Contact emergency numbers held on our database
- Undertake a home visit if no contact is received from you and invite you in to discuss the situation with us
- Call 101 (Police) and request a safe and well check if all other attempts to contact you fail to get a response
- Invite you to discuss the absences with us
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of penalty notices issued to each parent/carer for each child or legal action through the courts.

Who to contact if you or your child/children have questions or concerns about attendance?

- Day-to-day - speak to the teacher.
- More detailed support - speak to the School Attendance Coordinator/ Headteacher/Learning and Teaching Manager/Family Wellbeing Champion. You can contact the school office by telephone (01733 566849) or email us on office@dogsthorpeinfants.org.uk and a call back or appointment will be organised for you.

Data and Monitoring

How we monitor attendance/absence

We keep track all our children's attendance and absences thoroughly through regular reports from our Management Information System (Integris). We look at the reports on a regular basis to track any concerns that may arise due to unauthorised absences and to ensure that any interventions are timely and appropriate.

We routinely monitor attendance and absences daily, weekly, half termly, termly and annually to assist the school in providing support and/or changes to our process where necessary to provide the correct support to families.

We analyse all patterns of absence, both authorised and unauthorised* and try to ensure that parents/carers are informed of any child's attendance that fails below the National Average to prevent your child becoming a persistent absentee (PA) which means that they have an attendance below 90%. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parent/carer support and co-operation to tackle this.

Our interventions at this stage may include, but is not limited to:

- writing to parents/carers if attendance drops below the school's threshold of 94%
- requesting that they provide evidence to support absences
- calling a School Attendance Meeting
- making an Early Help Referral
- referring to the Local Authority for support

PA pupils are also tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

*Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is essential, preferably in writing so that it can be recorded correctly.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an exceptional circumstance such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other exceptional cause authorised by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. These include, but are not limited to:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, acting as interpreters or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance
- medical treatment overseas (unless part of emergency treatment whilst abroad on an authorised absence).

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is **never** an option to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Impact analysis

As part of our data analysis and monitoring process we will regularly assess the outcomes of our support/interventions to measure the impact that they are having on the improvement of children's attendance and attainment.

We will continue to meet with and engage with families to find out and help resolve any barriers to regular attendance, including signposting or referring to other agencies.

We will regular review cases to ensure that the school is providing the appropriate support/referrals as legal action, for our school is a last resort, but sometimes cannot be avoided.

Legal Interventions

Fixed penalty notices

When we may request a fixed penalty notice to be issued by the Local Authority in line with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for unauthorised leave of absence or where all support interventions do not secure an improvement in attendance.

Leave of absence/single absence event

As a school we ask parents/carers **not** to take children out of school without the permission of the Headteacher as per the Law and Legislation. Please remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Headteachers must comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance. In deciding about whether to authorise the leave the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually taking into account the evidence submitted in support. If the request is refused the Headteacher will inform all parties of their decision. If the Headteacher grants the request it is for the Headteacher to **determine** the length of time the pupil can be away from school.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**. It is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

Absence due to Non School Attendance (Irregular/Persistent Absenteeism)

Where the school has implemented attendance interventions and parent/carers have failed to support the school, the school may request a penalty notice under the Peterborough City Council, Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

A penalty notice can be issued if **one** of the following criteria can be met:

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices for ongoing attendance concerns may be issued in any academic year)
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions)
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website

Escalation of Procedures

When we escalate cases to higher level legal interventions

The school will make every effort to support families/children whose attendance is causing concern. However, there are some circumstances where despite the school's, the Local Authority's and extended work through multiple agencies fails to improve the attendance of children and at this point the school may instigate, or request that the Local Authority instigates a more formal legal intervention.

If this occurs a case may be prepared and presented to the Magistrates Court for prosecution under Section 444 (1) or 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996.

The outcome of these cases will be determined by the courts, of which can be:

- where convicted under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- where convicted under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.
- Impose a Parenting Order

Incentives and Rewards

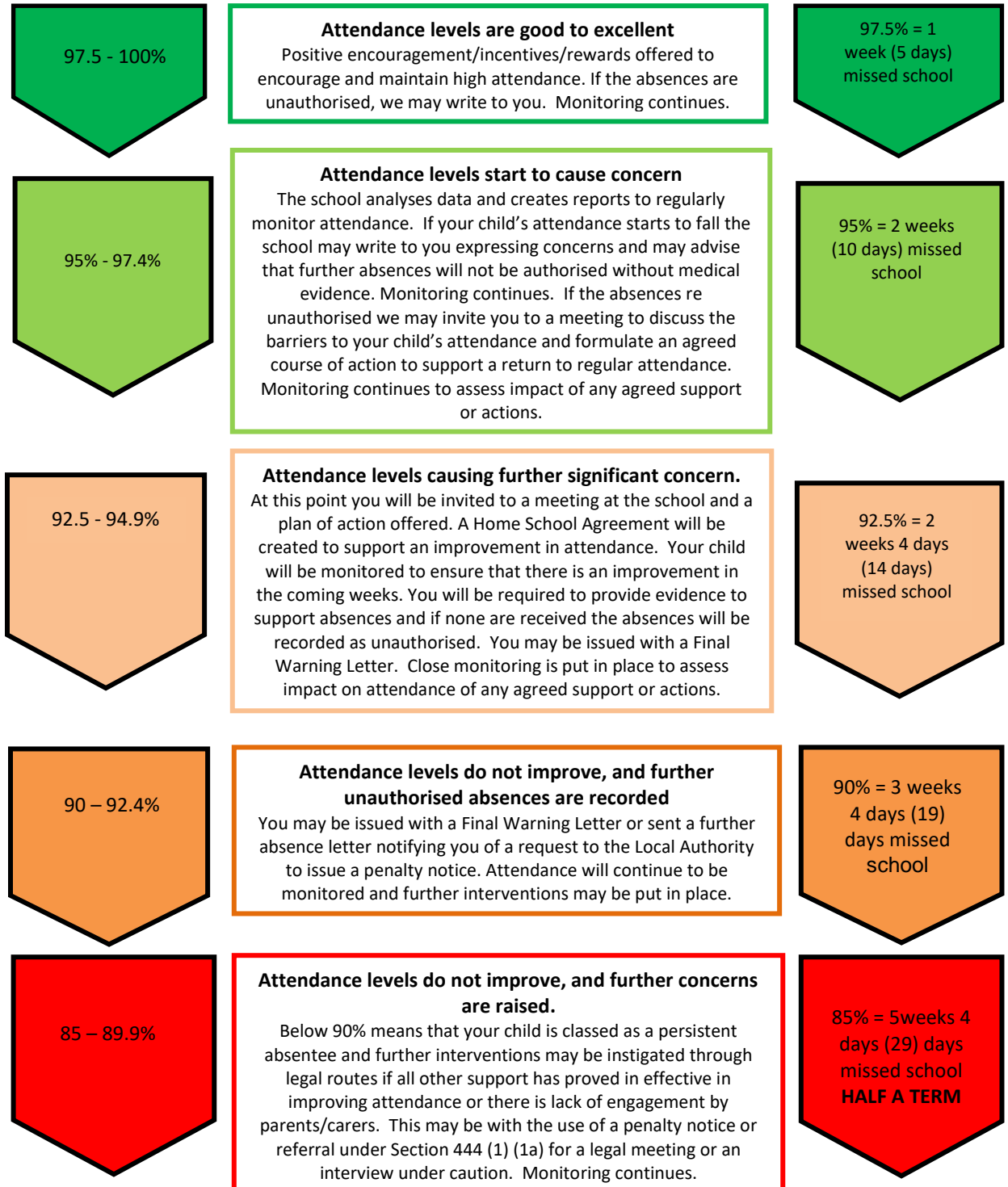
How our school is **promoting** and incentivising good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Have a whole school approach to attendance
- Provide details on attendance in our regular newsletters
- Report to you regularly on how your child/children are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress
- Update you at parent/carer evenings
- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through Shine Times and displays in school.

Our monitoring/intervention strategy

Below is the basis of our intervention pathway. We treat each child individually and therefore each case may take a different route depending on the barriers, needs of the family and any other circumstances which may be impacting on regular attendance. We try to take a holistic approach to dealing with and resolving barriers to non-school attendance and use legal interventions as a last resort.



Expectations of academy trust boards and/or governing bodies

Our Academy Trust Board (Hampton Academies Trust) and Governing Body have high expectations for attendance at our school.

It is their role to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure that our school leaders fulfil their expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge and help to focus our improvement efforts where needed most
- Ensure all our school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

References

The Education Act 1996, 2002 & 2011

Working together to improve school attendance (Guidance) May 2022

Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018,

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 & 2016

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, 2012 & 2013

Children Act 1989 & 2004

People with overall attendance responsibility in our school

Designated Senior Leader: Mrs Rebecca Waters

Attendance Co-Ordinator: Mrs Tina Gardner

Appendix 1: Guidance for Parents/Carers.

Dogsthorpe Infant School



Guidance on Attendance for Parents/Carers.

Attending school every day and on time is a key factor in your child's progress.

Persistent absences and lateness have a detrimental impact on your child's learning and creates a barrier to them becoming the best that they can be.

At Dogsthorpe Infants, we aim to work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that your child has the very best attendance possible. We expect you to share in this commitment by following these guidelines:

- ❖ Please ring us if your child is going to be absent from school. The answerphone is on overnight; please leave your name, your child's name and class and the reason for absence. It is **YOUR** responsibility to contact us in the case of absence.
- ❖ If your child is just feeling a little 'under the weather' then still bring them in. We find that children often brighten up once they are busy at school; if we feel they are not fit for school we will contact you.
- ❖ All illness over 3 days, should be supported by medical evidence e.g. a doctor's appointment card, sight of any prescribed medication etc. If your child is prescribed antibiotics they **do not need to be off for the whole course**. Medical advice is that a child can return to school after taking up to 3 days of antibiotics. If you choose to keep your child off for any longer period, then we would need to see proof from the doctors that this absence from school is necessary. Without further evidence the absence may be unauthorised. If your child requires antibiotics 4 times per day, then the school can administer these at lunchtime provided the relevant school paperwork is completed. If required 3 times per day - these doses can be worked around school hours.
- ❖ **Doors open at 8.45am and children must be in on time to start learning promptly at 8.50am.** Learning starts as soon as your child comes in so being late leads to missed learning opportunities. If you are running unavoidably late then ring us so that we know you are on your way.
- ❖ Registers are completed at 9am and will be closed by the class teacher. Your child will receive a late mark ('L') if they are not in by that time. If your child arrives after 9.15am then it will be classed as an 'Unauthorised Absence' ('U'). The code given will show that the child is on site, but arrived after the register had been finalised. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child comes into school via the main entrance, after 8.50am, even if it is before the registers have been closed, you will be asked for a reason for being late.
- ❖ **School finishes at 3:15pm** and children do become distressed if they are collected late. We appreciate that unexpected delays can occur, but please do give us a call to let us know you are going to be late. Persistent late collection is closely monitored.
- ❖ Inform us if your child has an unavoidable medical appointment (where possible at least 24 hrs beforehand). We will need to see evidence of this appointment such as a letter or appointment card. If no evidence is provided then the absence may be unauthorised. Please aim to book medical appointments outside of the school day unless it is an emergency.
- ❖ Talk to us if you require leave of absence for your child. **This will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances; no family holidays will be authorised** and may incur a penalty fine of £60 per parent, per child.
- ❖ If your child's attendance falls below 94% then we will write to advise you of this
- ❖ If your child's attendance falls below 90% then you will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher and/or Governors. Failure to attend or improve attendance can lead to a penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.
- ❖ Come and talk to us if you are finding it difficult to get your child to school. If there is a problem then we need to know about it so we can help.

Establishing good habits for attending school every day and on time now will set our children up well for the future and ensure that they 'Dream, Believe, Shine'.