



DOGSTHORPE INFANT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Ratified by: Standards Committee

Date: 6th December 2021

Minute: 12

Review Date: Annually in line with LA guidance

NB: This Policy is subject to change, at short notice, in line with statutory government COVID guidelines. Parents will be informed at point of change.

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 2020 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 from the school office.
How will this policy be monitored?	The Attendance Co-ordinator meets regularly with the Headteacher. Governors monitor attendance through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headteacher's half-termly Attendance 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)

Introduction

Dogsthorpe Infant School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its pupils/students 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. Our aim is to be at least in line with National Average for attendance.

The whole school community – pupils/students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the 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 of our pupils/students 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.

Attendance Co-ordinator

A member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Co-ordinator, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, children and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important:

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

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.

Safeguarding:

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

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

The Law relating to attendance

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'

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance 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 the days the school is open for pupils to attend.

Under this judgement a child 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 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

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 the parents/carers.

Our School uses a short induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education by the use of 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.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other exceptional cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- 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 or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance.

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 better 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.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

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

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School:

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 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.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; or
- Call into school and report to reception,

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; however, it remains your responsibility to contact the school first.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation 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.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The doors open at 8.45am and the school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that will indicate that your child is in the school building, but will be marked with a 'U' Code which is recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence:

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

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.

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 making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

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.

Deletions from Register

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs R Waters - Headteacher

Mrs T Gardner - Attendance Co-ordinator

Mrs S Hartropp - Link Governor responsible for Attendance

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good school attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

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 has 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:

- ❖ If your child is going to be absent from school please ring us. 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 support 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'.

Appendix 2: Attendance Awards.

To improve attendance and reduce the number of persistent absentees we have the following reward systems:

WEEKLY AWARDS.

- Each time the class achieves an overall attendance of 95% or above they will be awarded a star. Once the class has collected 5 stars they are awarded a prize for everyone to enjoy. The more stars the class wins, the better the prize gets!
- The class with the highest weekly % will be awarded the Attendance Cup to keep until the following Friday
- Any class achieving 100% attendance for the week will get a class certificate
- Individual reward systems for children who are persistently late including stickers, certificates & small prizes

TERMLY AWARDS.

- We will give out postcard certificates for 99% and 100% attendance.
- Parents of the children with 100% attendance will also receive a postcard certificate.
- Children with 100% attendance will also receive a small prize.
- Children with 100% will be entered into a prize draw to win a more significant prize.

ANNUAL AWARDS.

- We will give out certificates for 100% for the whole year (cut off period is in July).
- Children with 100% attendance for the whole year will be entered into a prize draw to win a prize. There will be runners up prizes (of a lesser value) for the other 100% attenders.
- We will reward the class with the best attendance for the year.