

DUNNINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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| Date of Policy: | January 2020 |
| Date of Review: | January 2023 |
| Member(s) of staff responsible: | Caroline Hancy |
| Governor(s) responsible: | School Improvement Committee |
| Signature of Chair of Governors: | |
| Date: | 15.01.2020 |



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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The main aims of this policy are to:

- raise awareness amongst pupils, parents, staff and governors of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- raise and maintain levels of attendance in school amongst pupils.

It is written with reference to:-

The Education Act 1996- Sections 434 (1) (3) (4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010,2011,2013 and 2016
School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (July 2019)

Guidance relating to pupil leave of absence from school (CYC August 2019)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007

City of York Code of Conduct for the use of Education Related Penalty notices (August 2018)

1. PRINCIPLES AND EXPECTATIONS

- I. At Dunnington CE Primary, we strive for the highest level of attendance from every pupil in order that they develop to their full potential during their time at school. By coming to school every day, on time, children receive the best start in life by having a good education. We expect all children on roll to attend on time, every day, when the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so.
- II. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend; we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes toward school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy, safe and rewarding place for everyone.
- III. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- IV. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure that we keep an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register also indicates whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2. DEFINITIONS

I. Authorised absence

An absence is authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent / carer E.g. if a child has been unwell and school receives a phone call /written note.

Only a school can make an absence authorised. Parents / carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents / carers will be classified as authorised e.g. if a parent was to take a child out of school to go shopping during school hours.

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II. Unauthorised absence

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the headteacher.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are reported to parents annually and the Department for Education three times a year. These are held on a pupil's school record throughout their school life.

The headteacher may consult with the Local Authority regarding the action to take over unauthorised absences.

Please note: Parents can be given a fixed penalty notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absence. Any parent issued with such a notice will be subject to a prompt fine of either £60 per parent per child (if paid within 21 days) or £120 per parent per child (if paid after the 21st day but within 28 days) Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to lead to prosecution

3. ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

If a child is absent, **parents/carers** should inform school of a child's absence and the reasons for the absence by:

- making a phone call prior to 9:30am on the day of a child's absence explaining the child is ill;
- send a note in advance advising of a medical appointment.

If a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which informs the school office of the absence.

Office staff will endeavour to contact the parent/carer if school has not already received notification – this is to establish the whereabouts of the child and therefore ensure his/her safety.

For this reason, a written note on the day of a child's return to school is not ideal.

4. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

At Dunnington CE Primary, we believe that children should be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best possible progress with their learning. However, we do understand that there are, very occasionally, circumstances where a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence.

Time off for leave of absence for any reason, including family holidays is not an automatic right.

Schools are expected **not to authorise** requests for **family holidays** unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. For example:-

- Service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal effect to the pupil's education
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Any other circumstances that the headteacher considers to be exceptional.

It is also expected that headteachers **will not authorise leave** where the following apply:-

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation

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- Poor weather experienced in school holiday
- Period overlaps with beginning or end of term

Parents / carers should contact school in advance to request any leave of absence. At Dunnington CE Primary School, we ask that at least 7 days' notice is given in order for your request to be processed by the school office.

Whilst the application must be made by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with, there is no restriction on who the leave is taken with. This is a matter for the parent(s) not the school.

At Dunnington CE Primary School, we treat each request for leave of absence on an individual basis taking account of the following criteria:

- **the exceptional circumstances outlined in the request; along with**
- **the amount of time requested;**
- **age of the pupil;**
- **the pupil's general absence/attendance record** (*Pupils should have at least 95% attendance for the current year before authorisation would usually be considered*);
- **proximity of SATs and public examinations** (*No leave for holidays will be authorised for children in Year 6 prior to the Statutory Assessment Tests*);
- **pupil's ability to catch up the work**
- **pupil's educational needs**
- **general welfare of the pupil;**
- **frequency of the activity; and**
- **when the request was made** (leave must be applied for in advance of taking it/ accepting an invitation)

Term-time leave of absence requests should be made using the school's Leave of Absence Request Form, available from the school office or downloadable from the school website. (See Appendix 1)

Requests for days off for religious observance will be considered as appropriate.

The headteacher may invite parents in to discuss any proposed leave of absence in term time.

Where a leave of absence request is not approved, the Headteacher will write to parents explaining the reasons and potential consequences. (Appendix 3)

5. LONG-TERM ABSENCE

When a child has an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, we will do all that we can to send material home so that he / she can continue to learn and keep up with school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, we will contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

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6. REPEATED ABSENCE

Pupils with attendance rates of below 90% are categorised as **persistent absentees**. We will send attendance reports to all parents at the end of each term (Appendix 2)

If the child has a growing number of absences, we will invite the parent/carer to visit school to discuss the problem.

If the situation does not improve, we will contact the local authority who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parent / carer understand the seriousness of the situation.

Legal action against any parent / carer who repeatedly fails to accept their responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly will be taken.

7. ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The government expects all schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence. The school therefore sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body. The targets should be challenging but realistic and based on attendance figures of previous years. Some consideration is made of attendance figures of similar schools.

8. PUNCTUALITY

Children should arrive at school between 8:45 and 8:55am, no earlier as staff cannot be available for supervision. Registration takes place between 8:55 and 9:05am. If children arrive during registration but before 9:15am, they are marked as late. The registers close at 9:15am, therefore, if a child arrives after this time, they will be recorded as 'late after the register has closed' which shows as an absence in the overall attendance figures.

Persistent lateness causes problems for the child, the class and the teacher. Parents should therefore try to ensure that their child arrives in time for the start of school.

9. ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Parents / carers

Parents / carers must do all they can to ensure their child attends school. They should monitor their child's attendance rate (data can be obtained from the school office) and ensure that the rate does not fall below unacceptable levels. They are expected to inform school before 09.30 on the first day of absence and to give an expected date of return. They may be asked to provide school with details of medical appointments /medication if their child's attendance falls below certain levels.

II. Class teacher

It is the class teacher's responsibility to:

- mark the register and record all known absences using the appropriate code
- discuss frequent absences or patterns of absence with the headteacher
- encourage pupils to maintain good levels of attendance and punctuality at all times

III. Headteacher

It is Headteacher's responsibility to:

- set attendance targets each year (see above);

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- review attendance and take appropriate action;
- oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality;
- report levels of attendance to governors in the Headteacher's Report;
- access IntegrisG2 to collect information on whole school, class or individual attendance;
- monitor and tackle low attendance and refer any children with attendance concerns to the local authority;

- develop home-school links and meet with parents if there is concern over a child's attendance.

IV. Office staff

It is the responsibility of office staff to:

- seek to contact parents / carers of absent children to establish the whereabouts of a child and reasons for absence

V. Governing Body

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance. Attendance rates are communicated in every Headteacher's Report so they can monitor this closely. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy: for seeing that it is carried out and for its review. They will therefore examine closely the information provided to them in order to ensure the attendance figures are as high as they should be.

VI. Local authority

York LA monitors attendance data provided by primary schools in a bid to tackle poor attendance amongst children aged 5 to 11.