

DALLAM COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Policy Review	May 2023
Approved by Headteacher	May 2023
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Author: Sue Wood
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Intent

Dallam Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive a full time education which provides opportunity for all pupils to realise their full potential. We recognise the strong statistical link between attendance and attainment; the higher a child's attendance, the higher their levels of achievement. Therefore, we are committed to working together with children and parents to promote 100% attendance wherever possible. We foster effective and efficient communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support. The Department for Education and Warrington Borough Council require schools to monitor and report the attendance levels of every child.

Aims

- To improve pupils attendance and punctuality
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance
- To make attendance a priority for the whole school including Governors, pupils, parents and teachers
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive to school on time
- To ensure safety and safeguarding of the children is maintained.

Purpose

- To ensure regular, punctual attendance
- To maintain detailed and accurate records
- To monitor poor attendance and intervene when necessary Parental Responsibilities Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act; a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special needs a child might have. Parents should always ring the school on the first day of absence, so the school is aware of the child's whereabouts. We ask that parents then give regular updates as to when we expect their child to be well enough to return to school. We ask parents to ring school by 9am on the day of absence.

Legislative Framework

- Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.
- All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Expected Levels of Attendance

Dallam Primary School
Attendance Policy 2023

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

At Dallam Primary School we expect all children to achieve at least 96%. We follow the colour coded flow chart below to support our children. The percentage attendance and colour code is entered on the children's reports every term and shared with parent and carers.

98 - 100% 96 - 97.9% Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent attendance accessing most or all learning opportunities• Good attendance – very few learning opportunities missed
93 - 95.9% Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk of underachieving• Approx 10 to 15 school days absent in an academic year
90 - 92.9% Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severe risk of underachieving• Up to 19 school days absent in an academic year
89.9% or below Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extreme risk of underachieving• Pupil is persistently absent• Upwards of 22 school days missed in an academic year

Attendance Partnership Expectations

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- To attend school regularly.
- To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day, having eaten breakfast or attend breakfast club.

We expect the following from parents and carers:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure contact is made with school, as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive to school well prepared for the school day, having eaten breakfast.
- To contact school before 9am if their child is going to be absent.
- To tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.
- To ensure appointments are made outside of the school day, but when they have to be during the school day, to bring the child to school before and after their appointment.
- To promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child attends school in the correct uniform, with the required equipment.
- To work in partnership with the school and other agencies in their best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant changes in their child's life, which may impact on learning.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Early contact with parents or carers when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Follow up support if needed, including referrals to outside agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities for attendance

- Dallam Primary School has a named member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.
- Members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school. Attendance is everyone's business.
- Attendance matters are regularly reviewed at Stay Safe Meetings and reviewed with the head teacher every half term.
- Attendance issues are reported, on a termly basis, to the Governing Body.
- We work closely with the Attendance Service from Warrington Borough Council to support the school with the processes associated with children's attendance. The Attendance Service provides legal monitoring services and support that will help reduce the number of persistently absent pupils and improve whole school attendance.

We believe that through attending school every day on time children will get the best possible start in life.

Services to support regular attendance

A number of support networks exist to support parents/carers to improve children's attendance. If a parent/carer is having difficulty maintaining high attendance for their child, in the first instance they should come into school and speak with their child's class teacher, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or our named member of staff responsible for attendance.

We can offer support to families through referrals to Early Help and may involve other services as appropriate, including:

- Attendance Officer at Warrington Borough Council
- School Health Adviser
- Educational Psychology Service
- School SENDCO
- CAMHS
- Children's Social Care
- Mental Health Support Team

Attendance Meetings:

Parents/ carers of children with attendance which falls below 93% will be regularly notified that attendance is a concern. They may be invited in to meet with either the child's class teacher or the School Attendance Lead. Any absence below 90% will automatically lead to a meeting in school with the school's Attendance Lead and or the Attendance Officer at Warrington Borough Council as they try to support the family to fulfil their legal requirements in ensuring the child accesses school regularly. These meetings may be face to face or virtual.

Attendance meetings will be planned around the child. For all children, the emphasis will be on increasing attendance. For some, there may be a greater focus on removing any barriers to good attendance and may involve the child; senior leaders meet with target children every week to promote and celebrate improved attendance. The target children will be determined by the school's lead for Attendance.

Referral to the Attendance Service:

The Attendance Officer at Warrington Borough Council will monitor persistent absence and lateness at least every half term. This may involve:

- Letters to parents/carers to remind them of the need for children to attend and point out their current rate of attendance (including copy of registration certificate).
- Informal meetings with parents/carers and, if age appropriate, with the child to challenge attendance levels and agree targets for improvement.
- Home visits.
- Where the child's absence meets the 'Persistent Absence' criteria and after the Attendance Officer has attempted to work with the family and the school to resolve the attendance problems, the case may be considered for prosecution.
- Warrington Borough Council operates a 'Fast-Track' prosecution process. The process involves the school, parents and the Attendance Officer setting time limited targets for the improvement of individual pupils' attendance. If agreed targets are not met within a 9 week time frame, the Local Authority may take legal action through the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Those found guilty of this offence may be fined up to £1,000.

Procedures

We will follow the following process for rewarding attendance and addressing attendance concerns of all pupils.

<p>98 - 100%</p> <p>96 - 97.9%</p> <p>Green</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent attendance accessing most or all learning opportunities • Rewards and incentives • Good attendance! • Very few learning opportunities missed • This is in line with our target, will support your child and given them a very good chance of achieving their true potential
<p>93 - 95.9%</p> <p>Amber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of underachieving • Attendance is starting to fall below target which may mean that your child is at risk of not reaching their full potential. • First letter to parent outlining concern will be sent • Some parents/carers will be invited to Attendance Meetings

Dallam Primary School
Attendance Policy 2023

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-1 weekly meetings with Senior leader
<p>90 - 92.9%</p> <p>Blue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe risk of underachieving • Attendance is too low and your child's education is suffering • Second letter to be sent to parent raising concerns and inviting them into school for a meeting • Important to remember that while 90% attendance may sound high, it is actually the same as ½ day EVERY WEEK missed from school! • Parent /carer will be invited to Attendance Meetings • 1-1 weekly meetings with Senior leader • KS2 target groups every Friday at a chosen time have dog mentor time to help remove any barriers to good attendance. • Children suffering from anxiety and school avoidance attend weekly 1-1 EBSA sessions.
<p>89.9% or below</p> <p>Blue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme risk of underachieving • Pupil is considered to be persistently absent: they are not in school enough to make good progress • Third letter sent unauthorised all absence without medical evidence • 1-1 weekly meetings with Senior leader • Refer to Warrington Borough Council • Meeting arranged with Attendance Lead and WBC Attendance Team • Legal Action considered

Promoting positive attendance

Dallam Primary School will promote good attendance and punctuality and keep both a high profile across the school. We will employ a range of strategies to do this, including, but not limited to:

- Class attendance boards at the classroom door displaying weekly % attendance.
- Weekly 100% in school on time raffle – children attending on time, every day for a full week will be given a raffle ticket to enter the weekly prize draw
- 100% attendance annual event – planned event on the last day of term for the children who attend school every day all year
- Attendance certificates – awarded regularly
- Weekly newsletter – class attendance data shared with parents/ carers weekly
- Celebration assembly – every Monday Morning, best attending class for EYFS/KS1 and KS2 receive the attendance trophy

Dallam Primary School
Attendance Policy 2023

- Special end of term attendance assembly celebrating 96% and above attendance and improved attendance.
- Pupils are tweeted every week sharing their excellent attendance
- Half termly whole class award for best attending class; their class teacher arranges additional playtime for all children in the class and awarded the attendance trophy
- All pupils with 100% attendance at the end of each term receive a special letter from the Head teacher
- School attendance and punctuality board is displayed in the school hall
- School staff are expected to promote good attendance and punctuality with their classes regularly and are expected to be excellent role models in this.
- Parent/ Carer meetings – information will be shared regularly with parents/ carers about attendance and punctuality
- Attendance information is shared termly on the child's school report
- Senior Leaders met weekly 1-1 informally with target children

Additionally, individual responses to promote attendance and punctuality include letters/ notes/alarm clocks, phone calls from teacher/ SLT, meetings to praise efforts, etc.

Absence

If a child is absent from school, parents/carers should contact the school by 9am on the first day to inform the school of the reason for the absence. Parents/carers are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence, at least daily.

Absence concerns are logged on CPOMS and shared with the Stay Safe Team.

At 9.15am school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents and reason given.

School staff will telephone first contact for the child to enquire as to the reason for absence. This includes telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits and referrals to the WBC Attendance Service and to the police for a safe and well check if required.

It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school.

Illness:

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent/carer makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school they should follow the above absence process.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's/carer's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

Dallam School will challenge parents'/carers' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 92%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness

- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

Medical appointments:

Parents/carers should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment.

Appointment cards and medical letters are uploaded onto CPOMS in the child's folder.

Parents/ carers are asked to provide proof of appointment to the office.

Other reasons for absences:

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance when considering requests for absence. We will not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or holidays.

Requests for Leave of Absence (exceptional circumstances):

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Procedure for requesting a planned absence:

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.
- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional.
- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office. There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head teacher, or the School's Attendance Lead.
- Where the head teacher is satisfied that there **are** exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, or the pupil's attendance record, they may request a meeting with the parent/carer; the absence will not be authorised without attendance at this meeting.
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.

Dallam Primary School
Attendance Policy 2023

- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised, a letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence being taken will be sent to each parent
- If, once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met then the absences will be referred immediately to the Attendance Team at WBC for consideration – this could involve potential legal action if the absence means that the child's attendance falls below 90%.

Holidays during term time will not be authorised.

Parents/carers are asked to notify school if they intend to take their child away during term-time, so that school know where a child is, parent/carer will be invited into school to complete a holiday in term time form. The holiday will be recorded on the register as an unauthorised absence, even when this form is completed. Parent/carer will receive a letter from the Head teacher and a letter from Warrington Borough Council unauthorising the absence.

Should the absence mean that a child's attendance falls below 90% (so the child is deemed to be persistently absent), consideration will be given to referral to the Local Authority's Attendance Team.

Persistent Absence and Unauthorised Absence

We take a proactive approach to improving the attendance of individual children whose attendance falls below 95%. Children who have less than 90% attendance are classed by the Department for Education as being persistently absent. We will communicate concerns about poor attendance to parents and use an escalating approach including letters, meetings in school and/or a referral to the Attendance Team at Warrington Borough Council, in order to support parents in improving attendance. At this time all absence will be recorded as unauthorised without proof of medical evidence.

Re-integration following long term absence

We may use some of the following strategies in respect of long term absence

- Individual meetings and support from Head Teacher, Family Liaison Lead and Attendance Lead
- Referral to Warrington Borough Councils' Medical Home Tutor.
- Phased return into school (in limited cases. For e.g., long term medical absence)

Punctuality

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every-day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



Start of day routines (Reception to Year 6):

School doors open for all classes in Reception to Year 6 at 8.40am and will close at 8.50am. Children arriving after this time report to the main school office. Registration takes place at 9am in the child's classroom.

Children arriving after 9am will be late for school and have to report to the main school office. Where a pupil arrives after the register closes (9.30am) this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes) and the number of minutes late are recorded on the register.

The registers monitored daily to identify pupils who are arriving late and regular late arrival for school will be challenged as not acceptable. Children who are late 5 or more times in a half term or have 30 minutes or more recorded in a half term will trigger a letter of concern, if lateness continues then a meeting with parents/carers in school is triggered. Pupils who have 10 or more U codes will be referred to the WBC Attendance Team for consideration of referral or potential legal action.

Nursery:

Nursery doors open at 8.45am and close at 9am. Registration takes place at 9am in the child's classroom.

Children arriving after 9am will be late for school and have to report to the main school office.

Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. We will follow our school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All schools are required to make the Local Authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Truancy within school

We monitor attendance to each session of the school day using the registers, in order to ensure all pupils are safe in school and whereabouts known. Additionally, class teachers will check all children are present after any break times. If a pupil does not present to scheduled lessons/activities, the Senior Leadership Team is informed and staff alerted to find missing pupils. If pupils cannot be located and are suspected of leaving school premises, parents will be informed and the police notified of a missing child.

Alternative Education Providers

On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at Dallam Primary School. Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored and reflected

on school registers. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with Dallam Primary School.

Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the Head teacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Head teacher [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No.2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks.

School complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categorise absence.

Use of Attendance Data

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census: at Dallam, we do this via our SIMS system. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about them from their previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information. School analysis attendance data each week and at the end of every half term looking at trends, patterns, groups and persistent absence. From this data targets are set with the Attendance Lead and Headteacher.

Where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with the Attendance Team from WBC during regular attendance meetings held at school. The Attendance Officer may then follow up attendance concerns with parents and carers on school's behalf.

Current guidance requests that attendance data is reported to the DFE weekly.

This policy is supported by other school policies, which are intended to safeguard and promote the welfare of our children. These include: Safeguarding Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, PSHE Policy – including Relationships and Sex Education Policy, Whistle-blowing Policy and eSafety Policy.