



**Downsway
Primary
School**

Attendance Policy

Date policy reviewed by school	24th Jan 2024
Date of next review	Jan 2025
Policy owner	Headteacher
Policy on website Y/N	Yes
Compliance tracker updated Y/N	Yes

Introduction and purpose

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children are expected to attend school regularly and punctually if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities provided. Downsway Primary recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time. Data shows that there is a strong link between attendance and academic attainment, therefore this policy is designed to promote good attendance

This policy applies to all children registered at the school.

This policy adheres to the relevant Children Acts, Education, Acts, relevant Case Law, Regulations and guidance from the Department for Education and guidance from the Local Authority.

Our procedures for punctuality are set out in appendix 1 and procedures regarding attendance and leave of absence are set out in appendix 2. Holiday in term time is not permitted (see appendix 2).

Data collection and analysis

All pupil attendance data is stored electronically on the school's School Information Management system (SIMS). The school is required to supply attendance information to the Department for Education (DFE) and West Berkshire Council when requested. Attendance registers are legal documents and are kept secure and preserved for a period of 3 years.

Role and responsibilities

Headteacher:

the Headteacher is responsible for:

- i. overall monitoring of school attendance
- ii. authorising a child's absence.
- iii. monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised e.g if a child's absence falls below the school target (**96%**), a letter will be sent to parents/carers. If attendance continues to fall below this threshold then parents/careers will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss ways of improving attendance.
- iv. will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) at the Local Authority (LA) if a child's attendance falls to below 90% and will provide reports and background information to inform discussions with the EWS
- v. liaising with other professionals to determine potential issues and reasons for absence.

Classroom teachers:

Classroom teachers are responsible for:

- i. ensuring registers are completed accurately and in a timely manner
- ii. maintaining an overview of class and individual attendance
- iii. informing the Headteacher of any attendance issues or concerns
- iv. emphasising to their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality

Administrative staff:

Administrative staff are responsible for:

- i. collating and recording registration and attendance information
- ii. taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence
- iii. contacting parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made
- iv. following up absences to ensure an explanation for absence is provided by parents/carers for inclusion in the register

Parents/carers:

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- i. ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at medical appointments
- ii. contacting the school office on the first morning of absence
- iii. informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time and providing evidence in the form of appointment cards
- iv. discussing with the school as soon as possible about a child's reluctance to come to school so that action can be taken to help.
- v. Making a request for absence during term time

Governing Board:

- i. will set annual attendance targets and monitor actual attendance compared to the target
- ii. will review and monitor attendance termly paying particular attention to vulnerable groups and children in receipt of the pupil premium funding.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Headteacher is responsible for implementation of this policy.

Appendix 1

Punctuality

Children are expected to arrive at school on time, lateness causes disruption for the individual child and to that of other children in the class. Children may arrive at school from **8.45 am** and go into class. There is no adult supervision on site before this time, so the school is not legally responsible for children arriving early. Registration takes place at **8.55am** and at **1pm**. Registers close 10 minutes after registration commences. A child arriving after this time is marked as "late" unless the school has been advised of the reason for late arrival.

In the event of concerns about punctuality, the class teacher will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If concerns persist, the Headteacher will write to parents/carers and if there is no improvement the Headteacher will arrange a meeting to discuss this further. In the event of persistent lateness, the Headteacher will make a formal referral to the EWS at the LA.

Appendix 2

Authorised and unauthorised attendance

It is a statutory requirement for the Headteacher to decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time. If this is not feasible then parents/carers are required to provide a copy of an appointment slips together with as much written notice as possible. If a child is absent from school, parents/carers are required to inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible on the first morning of absence. An absence will be recorded as unauthorised where the school has not received any reason or explanation or where the school has good reason to doubt the explanation provided. No leave of absence will be granted during assessment periods.

Parental request for absence from school

The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2013, set out the conditions for leave of absence during term time.

- i. The Headteacher shall not grant any leave of absence during term time unless he/she considers there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances are defined as being unique with significant exceptional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.
- ii. Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any request for leave must stipulate the exceptional circumstances, and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant granting leave.
- iii. The Headteacher will determine how many days a child may be absent from school if leave is granted.

- iv. All requests for leave of absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.
- v. Only requests for leave of absence made by the parent will be considered
- vi. Requests for leave of absence made in advance which are refused and a child is absent from school during this period, will result in the absence being unauthorised. This may result in legal action against the parent in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice which is issued by the Local Authority.
- vii. If a parent/carer takes their child out of school without informing the school, it will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised and may result in legal action against the parent in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice which is issued by the Local Authority.
- viii. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the prescribed timeframe, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority's Legal Department to consider instigating prosecution proceedings under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- ix. Each request for leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and not on its own merits. Leave taken for the following reasons will not be authorised: availability of cheaper holidays, booked the wrong dates by mistake, booked by another family member, attendance at weddings/funerals that is not immediate family and family birthdays.

Illness and other legitimate reasons:

If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school by 9.30am on each day of absence, in person or by telephone. If a child is absent and no reason has been given, the school will contact the parents before 10:00am on the first day of absence. If no message is received, on the second day of absence a telephone call will be made to the contacts listed on the pupil's information form to ascertain the reason for absence. This is a safety measure. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Absence may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments arranged in school time, provided a written explanation is received. When a telephone message has been received, the correct absence will be recorded in the register by office staff. When a letter has been received from parents, the reason for absence will be noted in the register by the office staff.

Where a child has many odd days of sickness and their attendance as such falls below 90% the school will ask for medical evidence of illness for future absences. Where this cannot be issued, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. When a child is absent and the school is unable to make contact with the family or those contacts listed on the pupil's information form, the following procedures will be evoked after a period of two days absence:

1. A member of the Senior Leadership team accompanied by another staff will visit the family home and ask to talk to the family and meet with the child.
2. The School will inform the LA that a pupil is missing in education and take advice as to what next steps should be followed – refer to West Berkshire Missing In Education Policy.
3. Children's Services will be informed that a pupil is missing in education.

4. The school will liaise with the police should they suspect a need to enforce entry.