

Aims/Rationale

Dussindale Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

At Dussindale Primary School we believe that regular school attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become responsible, organised and motivated adults. We value all pupils and for a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents and carers the importance of regular, punctual attendance, and how this will benefit them.

As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community.

Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's 'Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection' policy.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE 2020) states that: Governing bodies and proprietors should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.



Children Missing in Education (DFE 2016) states that: Where there is concern for a child's welfare, this should be referred to local authority children's social care. If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police should also be involved. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, it is essential to take action without delay

Absences from school:

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census

Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time is discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

In the DfE policy document entitled, '*School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*' (2020) it states, 'Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Leave of Absence forms are available on the school website or from the school office.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion'. If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

If a child is absent on the fifth day of a week in which 4 days unauthorised holiday leave has been taken, the school will expect to have evidence that the child is absent for medical reasons on the fifth day, such as a response to a phone call to the home.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have: at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the last 6 school weeks.

The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice.



Any pupil at Dussindale Primary School who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered. If a fixed penalty notice is issued the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the notice. The fixed penalty notice is per parent per child. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Executive Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education. (See Appendix 1)

Registers

Registers are completed on line, on the management information system, by the class teacher, or by any person providing cover for the class teacher.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.50am. The afternoon registration will be at 1.15pm. The registers will remain open for thirty minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport delayed.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close.

First Day Absence

Parents/carers are asked to telephone or e-mail the school before 9.20am to report a pupil's absence. If the school has not had contact from the parents of an absent pupil by 9.20am, the school office staff will attempt to contact the family by telephone, e-mail or text. The



school administrator will transfer any information to the online register. Teachers can access this information through their class computer.

If the school administrator is unable to contact the family to ascertain the reason for absence, they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The school office and the DSL will continue to try and contact the parents throughout the day, until contact is made.

Continuing Absence

Parents/carers need to update the school office each day until the period of absence is over.

Children Missing in Education

Where the school has reason to believe that the pupil may be a child missing education, the school and Local Authority Child Missing in Education (CME) Team must undertake and exhaust joint reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the pupil prior to agreeing removal from roll. This is a legal requirement of Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and 2016 and Children Missing Education statutory guidance. The school will follow the safeguarding policy in respect of CME.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the office staff and teachers to be aware of, and bring to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful, the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one, or ask for medical evidence in the form of a medical certificate, prescription, doctor's note, etc.

In other cases the school will seek advice from the Local Authority Attendance Liaison Officer.

Families may be signposted to Norfolk Early Help and JustOneNumber Norfolk.

Persistent Absence [PA]

The school will contact parents to inform them when their child's attendance is below 92%. All pupils whose attendance level falls below 90%, unless due to known medical issues, will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Deputy headteacher/DSL.



A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome and that as far as possible, they are given an opportunity to catch up on missed work.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence - This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.
2. Authorised absence - This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.
3. Approved Educational Activity - This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. These could include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

4. If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education. (See Appendix 1)

Register Security

Registers are taken online via the Management Information System which is password protected. Attendance records will be kept in line with our Record Management Policy.

Attendance Targets

The Senior Leadership team will set annual school attendance targets based on an analysis of performance. Targets will relate to national averages.

Our schools targets are:

Attendance rate of 97% or above

Persistent absence rate of 1.9% or less



Any pupil with attendance below 90% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences.

Legal Framework

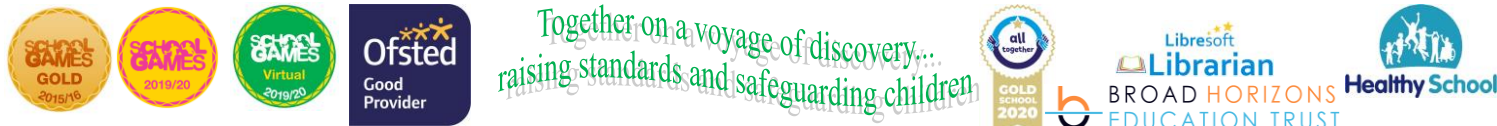
- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

This policy pays due regard to (but not limited to):

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE 2020)*
- *DFE School Attendance Guidance (DFE 2020)*
- *Children Missing in Education (DfE 2016)*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children • School attendance parental responsibility measures (2018 updated Feb 2019)*

Appendix 1: Registration Codes

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	
\	Present (PM)	
B	Off-site educational activity	This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately,



		schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work.
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
D	Dual Registered - at another educational establishment	This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.	If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
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J	Interview	This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to transfer to another educational establishment.
L	Late arrival before the register has closed	Present
M	Medical or dental appointments	Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established, the register should be amended and record who made the amendment. If a reason cannot be obtained the DSL must be notified.
O	Absent from school without authorisation	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity	This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
R	Religious observance	Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
T	Traveller absence	This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.
V	Educational visit or trip	This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.
X	Not required to be in school. -	(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census) This code is used to: - record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend. - Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)



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raising standards and safeguarding children



Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or • The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or • A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school. This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.
Z	Pupil not on admission register	This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations

Appendix 2

School Attendance Guidance Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year (DfE Sept 21).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

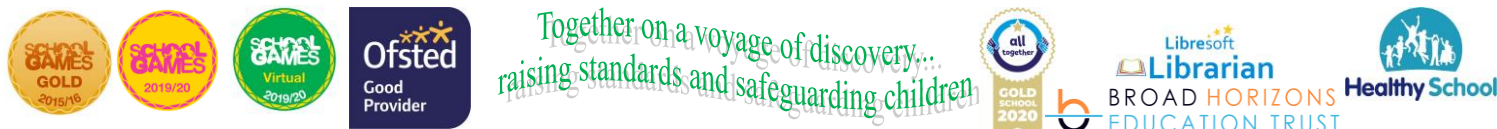
The school will refer to the DfE Attendance Guidance Addendum (via the link above) for 2021 to 2022 where pupils are not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Please note the following with regards to attendance data collection:

Data collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2022, collecting data for the autumn term 2021. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2022, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.

Lateness



The registers will remain open for thirty minutes after the specified time for the cohort. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport delayed.



The Yare Education Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 10301555. The registered office is at Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form, Laundry Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 0XS.