



Attendance Policy

Overview of contents of this policy	
1.	Introduction
2.	Definitions
3.	If a child is absent
4.	Requests for leave of absence
5.	Long Term Absence
6.	Child Missing in Education
7.	Rewards for Good Attendance
8.	Repeated unauthorised Absence
9.	Attendance targets
10.	Monitoring and Review

Safeguarding Statement: The school is committed to safeguarding children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Equality Statement: We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

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Appropriate Governing Body Committee: SCC

Date: January 2024

Review Date: January 2025

Date approved:

Signed:

1 Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under national statutory orders the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2. Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3. If a child is absent

- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office.
- All attendance related calls are made by 10.00am.
- A priority list, including pupils being monitored for poor attendance, lateness or pupils open to children services, will be contacted first.
- If no contact is made then DSL will report to children service, this could action a home visit by a family partnership zone worker.
- The order of attendance calls is year 6 parent/carers being contacted first, going down to reception. This is due to year 6 pupils making their own way to school.
- To report a child's absence to school the following methods can be used: School absence line, email, letter or parent mail.
- Communication may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4. Requests for leave of absence

Changes to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term times unless there are exceptional circumstances. *Taking a holiday during term time does not qualify as exceptional circumstances.*

Dorset Children's Services Directorate, fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular basis. Any time away from school can have a significant impact on educational attainment, success in later life and longer-term health and well being.

Dorset Council will be supporting all schools in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school. Therefore any unauthorised absence, such as taking holidays in term time, can result in a Fixed Term Penalty Notice. Failure to pay a Fixed Term Penalty Notice may result in a criminal conviction and a fine in the Magistrates Court of up to £1000.

In order to authorise absence during term time, the Headteacher will require written proof from an employer that leave of absence will only be given during term time.

If parents require further clarification then they should contact either the Director for Children's Services at Dorset Council or the Department for Education.

5. Long-term absence

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will send work home and if it is needed, contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6. Children Missing Education (CME)

The Government has placed a duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by suitable we mean efficient full-time education suitable for her/his age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs the child may have. The duty does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly. These children are referred to as Children Missing Education. Children are identified as missing from education when they are of compulsory school age and are:

- Not on a school roll
- Not being educated other than at school
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:

- They do not start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the education system
- They are removed from school by their parents
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area
- The family move home regularly
- Family breakdown
- Children who do not make the transition between key stages, e.g. Nursery to Primary, Primary to

Secondary Children and young people in the following groups are more likely to be missing from education:

- Young people who have previously committed offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Children of homeless families perhaps in temporary accommodation or housing
- Young people who run away from home
- Children with long-term medical and emotional needs
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees and child who are from asylum seekers/refugees families
- Children of immigrant families not yet established in the UK
- Looked after children
- Children with Gypsy/Traveller background
- Young carers
- Children from transient families
- Teenage mothers
- Excluded pupils

Children missing from education are at a much greater risk of:

- Physical harm
- Becoming involved in crime
- Demonstrating anti-social behaviour
- Abusing drugs and alcohol

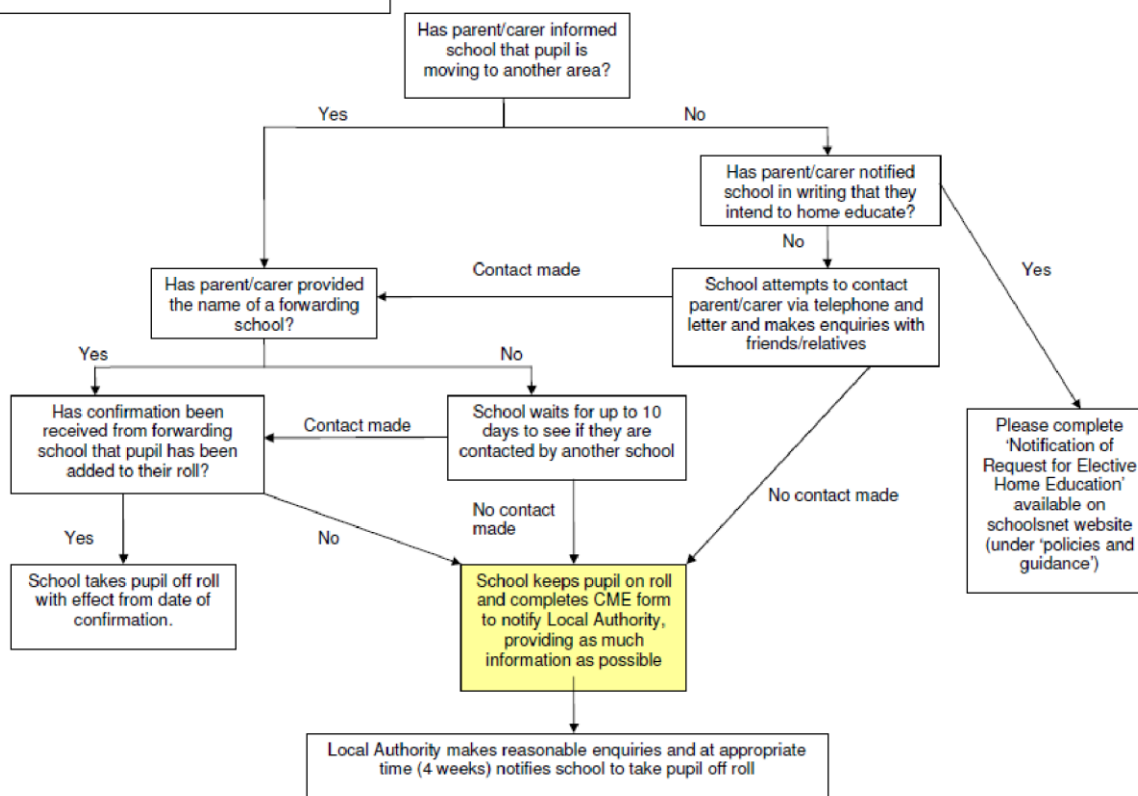
- Sexual exploitation
- Being illegally employed
- Forced marriages

An effective partnership between schools and a Local Authority is essential to minimise the risk to children, maximising engagement and desired outcomes for learning and to protect professionals working to support children. The Local Authority and partner agencies also work closely together to help safeguard children.

A chart below illustrates the process to follow if a pupil is missing from education. In the first instance the school will make every effort to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil, this might include telephoning home, contacting the GP, friends, other relatives that are known. It is imperative that guidelines are followed in relation to 'children missing education', particularly as some of our most vulnerable families who frequently change addresses are likely to get lost in the system if the appropriate action isn't taken by our schools. If there is reason to believe that a child has transferred to another school every effort to contact that school to ascertain whether or not your information is true or false. If any members of the school staff have any reason to believe that there may be any child protection issues involved then the local office will be contacted straight away and if necessary the police.

After 4 weeks, should the school and the Local Authority be unable to locate where the child has moved to, the school will be advised by the Local Authority to remove the child's name from it's roll. It is imperative that no children are removed from the school roll unless authorised to do so by the Local Authority. If the appropriate actions are not followed there are significant safeguarding issues.

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION FLOW CHART



7. Rewards for good attendance

In our weekly assembly the weeks year group attendance is shown for the top 3 year groups, who then receive merits if their class has been in school more than 95% that week.

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special platinum certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

8. Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will follow the Dorset Council Childrens Services penalty notice protocol, Procedures to meet parents and seek to improve of the situation.

The school, supported by the Locality Team, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

9. Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year, these are set in line with government requirements. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years the school is currently set at 96%. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

10. Monitoring and review

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they are provided with regular updates from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided and seek to ensure that our attendance policy is being followed and our attendance figures are in line with requirements.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The rates of attendance are published on a weekly basis and can be viewed on our school website.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. Class TAs can be assigned to carry out contact. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.