

DAWN HOUSE SCHOOL – STAFF HANDBOOK	
Policy Title: School Attendance	
Section: A	Policy No: A.10
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Name of Originator: PC	Designation: DSL/attendance lead

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Dawn House School believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Dawn House School values all pupils. We aim to work inclusively with all pupils to recognise barriers to school attendance and work proactively and individually to overcome them. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the barriers for good attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Dawn House School recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. 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, bullying, behaviour, inclusive learning and wellbeing.

Key school personnel.

Jenny McConnell	Principal
Philip Chandler	Attendance Lead
Shelia Tuckwell	Administration
Emma Braybrook	Engagement Teacher
Alex Rose	Link Advisory Board Member.

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1 Aims.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#)

[\(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contentsThe%20Education%20(Penalty%20Notices)%20(England)%20(Amendment)%20Regulations%202013)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Engagement Team [Principal, Deputy Principal, Attendance Lead and Engagement Teacher] is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Support working with the parents of pupils to develop specific approaches for attendance.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and regularly to pupils and parents through the weekly newsletter. Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

3.2 The Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to relevant school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Engagement Team.
- Reporting significant attendance concerns to the Local Authority.

3.3 Engagement Teacher

Will work with the Engagement Team to deliver proactive inclusive support to identified pupils to improve attendance and engagement in learning.

Will develop relationships with pupils, parents and carers to identify and work together to reduce barriers to attendance and learning, this may involve home visits, working in alternative settings such as libraries and community centres.

Will record interventions with pupils and parents/carers.

Flexibly working with individuals and groups of children who are at risk of lower than expected attendance.

3.4 Lead Practitioners

Will offer support and guidance to form tutors regarding attendance issues.

Will monitor attendance for their area of school.

Will work with form tutors and the engagement Team to follow up on attendance concerns.

Will escalate to Senior Leadership Group who in turn may direct to the Engagement Team for action.

3.5 Form Tutors

- Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office
- Building close and productive relationships with pupils parents /carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- To flag up to their Lead Practitioner of any patterns of or persistence of absence.

3..6 School Office staff

The School Office Staff will

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Integris
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Lead where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school for all sessions possible.
- Reports their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day, and advise when they are expected to return...
- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.50 am and finishes at 3.30pm Monday through to Thursday and at 2.00pm on Friday.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 and will be kept open until 9.30
The register for the second session will be taken at 12.50 and will be kept open until 1.00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by

calling the school office, reporting on WEDUC, email pupilsabsence@dawnhouse.org.uk staff.

Key contacts to report absence.

Website	WEDUC absence section
Email	pupil.absence@dawnhouse.org.uk
Text	07880738815
Telephone	01623 795361

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents are to inform the Form Tutor or the School Office of the details regarding a planned absence.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Where contact with the parent cannot be made the attendance lead will alert a senior leader to decide on next steps.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the pupil's local authority will be made aware.

4.5 Reporting to parents

The School will report attendance information to parents through the annual review of EHCPs and end of year reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Principal will only grant **withdrawal from learning** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As withdrawal from learning will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a withdrawal from learning will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. Parents are able to request a "**Withdrawal from learning application form**" from the school office. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for withdrawal from learning.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

6 Monitoring attendance.

Daily. 9.30 each morning the school office will run a report identifying any unexplained absences. The school office at 10.00am will contact parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence and this will be recorded on the attendance register.

Fortnightly. The attendance lead will prepare data for the Senior Leadership Group and Lead Practitioners highlighting attendance for all pupils. The Lead Practitioners will monitor attendance, understand the reasons behind absence for individual pupils and will direct interventions for improvement.

Termly. The attendance lead will prepare a report of the terms attendance analysis to be presented to School Advisory Board and trustees.

The impact of missing school.

If a child has attendance of 90% this equates to half a day of learning lost each week, or 4 weeks of lessons over one year and half a year missed learning over a 5 year period!

Missing time affects progress academically and socially. Pupils are expected to attend school all days they are able, lost days in school means fewer lessons attended which mean pupils will not be reaching their full potential.

If a child is unable to attend school parents/carers are asked to contact school via the office, on-line through Weduc or by email to pupil.absence@dawnhouse.org.uk

. Dawn House School, appreciates the complex needs of our pupils, their medical requirements and distance travelled to school. We have very high aspirations for all.

Each pupil attending Dawn House School is an individual and their own unique set of circumstances and needs will affect their ability to attend school successfully.

To support pupils transitioning into Dawn House School they may be guided to attend a reduced number of sessions whilst settling into school. Many of our pupils will have negative experience of school and school refusal. Where a pupil is expected to attend a reduced number of sessions this is agreed by a senior manager with the form tutor and the parent/carer and an agreement is reached regarding the welfare and safeguarding of a child during normal school hours when not attending school. [reduced time -declaration]

Where a pupil is not able to be attending full time after 4 weeks, their individual timetable is regularly reviewed and if appropriate increase time in school.

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Dawn House School we attach the highest priority to ensuring all pupils on roll are exceptionally well protected and safeguarding procedures are adhered to. In order that we can be clear in regards to safeguarding children on our school role but not attending a full timetable we ask that you sign and return this declaration.

Pupil name

Class Group

Reason for reduced attendance/ part timetable.
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Times required to be in school

W/C					
Monday	AM				
	PM				
Tuesday	AMs				
	PM				
Wednesday	AM				
	PM				
Thursday	AM				
	PM				
Friday	AM				
	PM				

I have discussed and agreed the above part time attendance plan for my child.

I will take full responsibility for my child during the hours when not attending school.

I will take full responsibility ensuring the health, safety and welfare of my child when not at school and will seek guidance from school if I have any concerns.

Parents/Carer name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Dawn House Senior Manager

I confirm this timetable is in the best interest of the child and will be reviewed by

Name

Signature _____

Date



APPLICATION FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING DURING TERM TIME

EVERY DAY COUNTS

GOOD ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL = GOOD PROGRESS

Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school during term time. Whilst wishing to maintain our good home school relationships and supporting the individual needs of our pupils we ask that before completing the application form you carefully read the notes below.

The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. Local Education Authorities work with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and schools can refuse your request to take your child out of school.

- If you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you must apply for permission in advance in writing using the attached form. Permission for authorised exceptional leave of absence may be granted for holidays only in special circumstances, totalling no more than two weeks in any school year. Please note the school year is from September to July.
- The DfE state that absence for holidays in term time due to the following reasons will not be authorised:
 - Availability of cheap holidays.
 - Availability of desired accommodation.
 - Poor weather experienced in the school holiday period.
 - Overlap with beginning or end of term holidays booked before checking with the school.
- There are certain times of the year when a child may experience extra problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence and give permission for absence during term time, the school will take these and other factors into account.



- If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice or a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a withdrawal from learning for your child during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed absence as possible.

If you would like to discuss your child's individual situation please contact Philip Chandler.



APPLICATION BY PARENT/ CARER FOR CHILD'S WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's name Tutor Group/ Class

Home address

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of last day at school Date of return to school

Total number of school days missed

Could you please explain the exceptional circumstances that make it necessary to request withdrawal from learning?

.....



A Speech and Language UK school

.....

.....

.....

Do you expect to be requesting any more term time this academic year?

.....

I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/ Carer making application
.....

Signed Date

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE

Please do not book your holiday until you know that the school will authorise your child's absence