



Attendance Policy

Darrington CE Primary School

Introduction

This policy sets out the expectations of pupils, parents/carers, and school in trying to ensure every child has the maximum opportunity to learn and achieve their potential through excellent attendance at our school.

Aim

Darrington CE Primary School, we recognise that excellent attendance is crucial to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children. We feel that the whole of our school community should take responsibility for attendance. Since there is a direct correlation between attendance and attainment, the aim of this Attendance Policy is to raise levels of attendance and punctuality for children, therefore maximising their opportunities for improved attainment and opportunities both in school and for later in life. The school has a zero tolerance attitude towards absence and days out during term time, unless they comply with very limited exceptional or unavoidable circumstances.

There is a clear link to between poor attendance and low attainment which means the lower the attendance rate is of a pupil, the likelihood is that the attainment level of that pupil will be lower than those with a good attendance rate.

Objectives

- Work effectively with parents/carers and partner agencies, using a range of strategies to improve the attendance of individual pupils and the whole school.
- Include all school staff, parents, pupils and Governors in school attendance strategies.
- Develop a robust electronic data handling system, enabling school staff, the LA and DfE to access statistical data in order to work effectively in partnership.
- We aim to have attendance at 97%. To do this, we must reduce absence and lateness, and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.

The Law

Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. Parents, therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's school attendance. Failure can lead to legal action being taken by the LA in the Magistrates Court, or the need to issue Fixed Penalty Fines. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence, Section 444 (1A) where a parent **knowingly** allows their child to be absent from school. This offence can carry a custodial sentence.

Absence from school

Any absence from school is detrimental to a child's education and progress. It disrupts learning, routines and progress. School will follow up unexplained absences by contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence. Parents/carers may be invited into school to discuss attendance issues if there is a cause for concern.

Research has shown that even a few days lost in any one academic year can have a significant impact of learning and achievement.

Attendance 97% - 100% 1-10 sessions per year (1 session is half day)	Children are more likely to achieve expected or above expected attainment.
Attendance 96% to 90%	Children may be affected due to missed sessions which could impact in attainment.
Attendance 90% and below	Children are three times more likely NOT to make expected progress and leave the school with significantly lower attainment.

Authorised absence

Some absences are unavoidable, usually due to illness, bereavement or difficult family circumstances. These absences should be supported by medical evidence where possible or a written explanation from the parent/carer.

Examples of authorised may include but are not to be assumed as an automatic authorisation;

- Serious illness.
- Unavoidable medical appointments.
- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement of a close family member.
- Days of religious observance.
- Involvement in a public performance, or recognised sports/performing arts club.

Unauthorised absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are NOT permitted by law and these will be recorded as unauthorised absences. Examples of unauthorised illnesses may include;

- Birthdays.
- Shopping trips.
- Days out.
- Term Time Holidays.
- Absences where no explanation has been received.

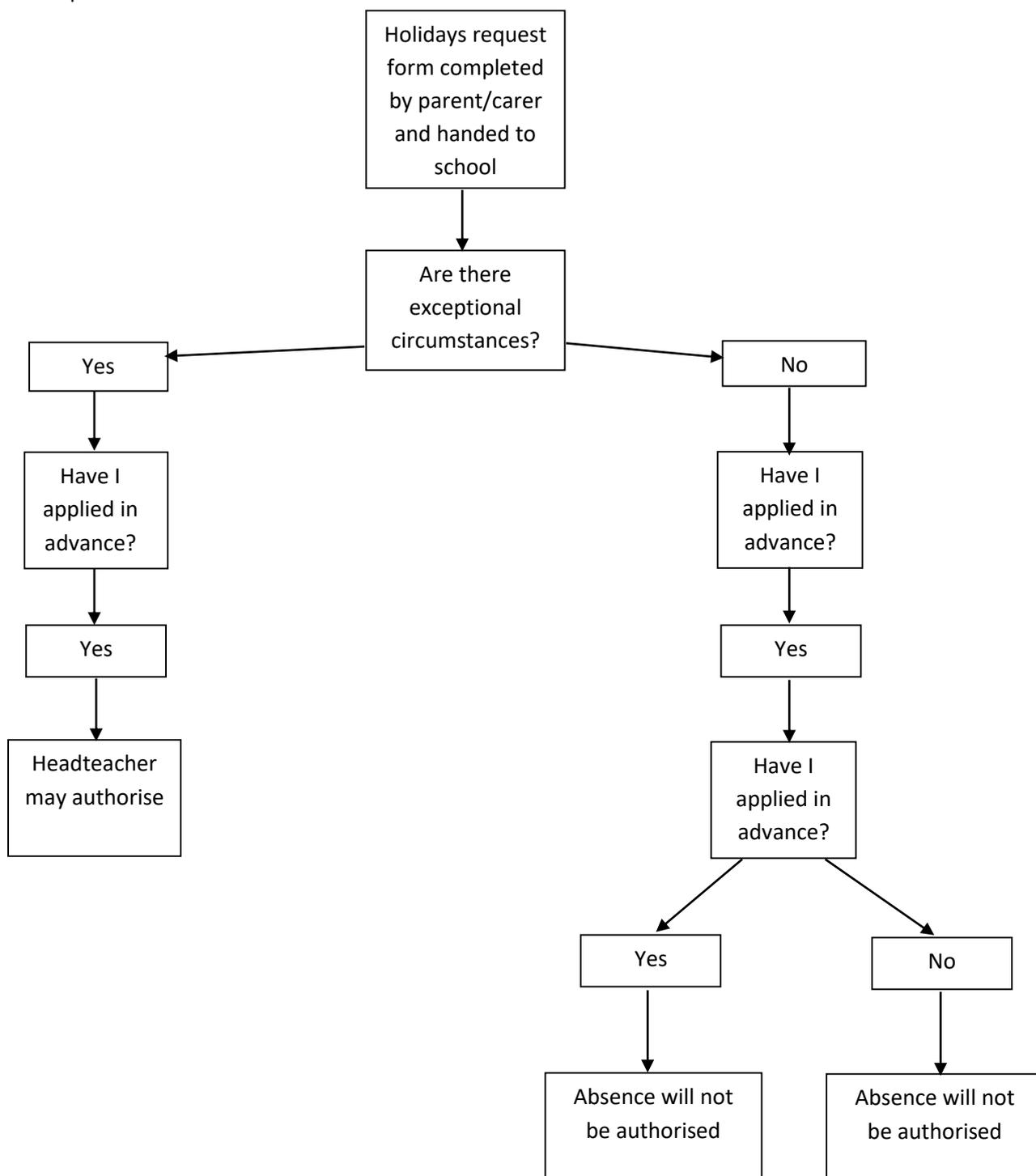
The decision as to whether an absence is authorised or not remains with the Headteacher.

Holidays taken in Term Time

It is strongly encouraged that all holidays are taken in school holidays and not in term time. The more time a child misses school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work and valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work set can only take place when the child is in the classroom. If parents/carers still choose to take their children out of school, it is their responsibility for any work missed to be done at home, on return from the holiday. Upon request for a Holiday Form from the office, parents will be asked to sign an agreement and must ensure that the work is completed. This will also be included in the Home School Agreement.

Exceptional circumstances remain the decision of the Headteacher at all times.

Flowchart for requests



Persistent absence

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee if he/she has missed or more of school for any reason and has an attendance of below 90%

The school will invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation. A range of school strategies can be deployed to improve attendance.

Punctuality

The Law states that children should arrive at school on time, everyday. School opens at 8.50am and registration is at 8.55am. Registration will close promptly at 9.10am. Pupils should be there ready to learn for the start of the school day. The school day begins promptly with a morning activity in each class, which is crucial to a child's learning. Families are expected to wait on the school playground and line up in classes when their class teacher comes out to collect them. If the weather is bad, the school doors may be opened to enter upon arrival. After this time, the children's entrances will be locked and latecomers will have to enter through the main entrance, via the School Office.

Example of the school day

8.50am	Doors open ready for learning, registration begins. All children present are marked as attended.
9.00am	Classroom registration closes. Any child arriving after this time will be marked as late and recorded as 'L' code on the register.
9.10am	Registration closes. Any child not present after this time will be marked as absent for that session if an explanation has not been provided and marked with an 'O' code. If a reason has been provided and this is deemed as an unauthorised absence they will also be marked with an 'O' code.

Roles & responsibilities

Pupils

- Arrive at school, on time everyday with correct equipment and ready to learn.
- Comply with school regulations regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Discuss any concerns they may have with staff regarding attendance and punctuality.

Parents

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when your child will return. Contact the school as soon as possible if absence is unavoidable,
- Where possible arranging routine dental and medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays. Copies of appointment cards or letters will be required by school to support these appointments.
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- Ensure pupils arrive at school on time everyday and that routines are in place at home to support this.
- Avoid term time holidays, and attempt to minimise school time appointments.

- Encouraging your child to attend school with minor ailments such as a runny nose or cold if they are well enough in themselves to do so. This also helps to build resilience for their future.

School

- Set high expectations for pupil attendance, and monitor individual and whole school attendance on a weekly basis.
- Identify causes of concern with regard to pupil attendance.
- Make initial contact with parents where there is unexplained absence.
- Send out attendance letters every half term to inform parents of the attendance of their child
- Communicate with parents/carers to discuss where there is no improvement and discuss future courses of action.
- Maintain electronic registration data systems effectively and deploy them robustly to facilitate presentation of reports.
- Provide attendance data for parents at every parent consultation session.
- Publish your child's attendance figures on his/her annual report.
- Promote attendance at all levels – within school, the community, the LA, regionally and nationally.
- Celebrate excellent and improved attendance through a variety of incentives and schemes.

Rewards and incentives

We will celebrate and reward excellent and improved attendance and ensure children are recognised for their effort and continued attendance. We will do this through a variety of incentives and schemes on a weekly, and termly basis.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request. It will be reviewed annually or as appropriate to new legislation or to the needs of the school.

Addendum to Attendance Policy in light of the Covid-19 pandemic

This addendum provides additional information in respect of how the current Attendance Policy for Darrington will be applied during the current Covid-19 pandemic. It should be read in conjunction with that policy. The addendum will apply for as long as the government guidance states that changes to pupils' attendance at school remain in place.

Compulsory Attendance at School:

As per government guidance, the requirement for pupils to attend school every day has ceased to be compulsory. Parents currently may choose whether to send their children. Attendance is however, encouraged. As such, the current legislation around school attendance has been relaxed. Parents will not be prosecuted or fined if they choose not to send their children to school during this current period.

Absence from school remains detrimental to a child's education. During this period, any unexplained absence from school will be followed up in the normal manner as per the existing policy. This is in line with our safeguarding policy and practices.

The definitions regarding authorised and unauthorised absence as outlined in the policy remain. Pupils absence will still be regarded as unauthorised for the reasons listed in the policy.

The policy surrounding term time holidays remains in place. Term time holidays are not permitted.

It is likely at this time that many pupils will fall into the current definition of persistently absent. As such the definition of persistently absent will be suspended for this period. As such, we will not actively pursue parents when pupils are persistently absent. We will however work with parents where pupils are absent from school for an unauthorised reason or regularly absent for authorised reasons.

We will continue to apply all safeguarding responsibilities connected to pupil attendance at school as detailed in the policy.

We will continue to promote good attendance and celebrate this.

As per the government and Public Health England Guidance, pupils who are ill or who fall ill whilst at school will be required to stay away from school. If Covid-19 is suspected, pupils should stay away from school, as should their siblings and other members of their household, until they have recovered or have received a negative test. Proof of a negative test will be requested before the pupil returns to school.

Please also note the start time and the end of the school day have been staggered so that social distancing can be applied effectively. Please see the table below:

Year Group	Arrival time	Collection time	School Entrance/exit	Classroom Entrance/exit
Nursery group 1	9.00am	2.30pm	Denby Crest	Nursery (side of school)
Nursery group 2	9.15am	2.45pm	Denby Crest	Nursery (side of school)
Reception	9.30am	3.00pm	Denby Crest	Dolphins Classroom
Year 1	9.30am	2.45pm	Phillips Lane	Meerkats Classroom
Year 6	9.00am	3.00pm	Phillips Lane	Eagles Classroom
Key worker children	9.00am	3.30pm	Denby Crest	Main reception

Policy title	Attendance Policy
Monitoring and review	Reviewed September 2019
Links	N/A
Staff responsible	Headteacher
Committee responsible	Pupils and Standards Committee
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Review date	September 2020