

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to all pupils and parents/carers of pupils on roll at Downe Manor Primary School.
- 1.2 At Downe Manor Primary school we aim to:
 - Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 95%
 - Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
 - Maintain good time keeping
- 1.3 Good attendance at school is important for the following reasons:
 - Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
 - Regular attendees make better progress socially and academically
 - Regular attendees find school routines and school work easier to manage
 - Regular attendees find learning more satisfying
 - Regular attendees settle into high school more easily

2. How parents and carers can help

- 2.1 Please ensure that your child attends school regularly.
- 2.2. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school. If there is a reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty with your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to let us know so that we can support you over this difficult period.
 - Telephone us **each morning** of any absence, giving us the reason for absence.
 - Arrange all non-urgent medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
 - Keep us updated by telephone or letter if your child has any extended period of absence. If your child is off for 3 days or more, a doctors note will be required otherwise the illness will be unauthorised.
- 2.3 Please make sure we **always** have your current contact numbers- this includes all telephone numbers (landline and mobile), childminders and emergency contact links.

3 What the school does to ensure good attendance

- 3.1 We have a thorough process for ensuring good attendance. We will:
 - Follow up unexplained absences by text message, phone calls and letters
 - Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our school newsletters, the school brochure, the Home-School agreement and pupil annual reports
 - Publish our attendance rate.

Attendance Policy

- Acknowledge and rewards good attendance and punctuality
 - Publish your child's attendance rate on his/her annual school report
 - Let your know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance
- 3.2 If we continue to have concerns about your child's attendance, we will make a referral to the school attendance officer who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance issues.
- 3.3 At the end of each term, letters will be sent to parents if their child's attendance is below 96% or they have had more than 3 late marks for the term.
- 3.4 Once a child's attendance falls below 95% for any reason they are termed a 'persistent absentee'. Persistent absenteeism is a serious problem for pupils as they miss out on valuable learning and gaps in their learning become evident. Such low attendance is well below our expectations and the school will work with the parents to help improve it.

4. Types of absence

- 4.1 Some absences are allowed by law and are known as *authorised absences*. These include:
- If a child is ill
 - Religious observance
- 4.2 There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as *unauthorised absences*. Examples of unauthorised absence are:
- Waiting for a delivery
 - Going for a family day out
 - Sleeping in after a late night
 - Going shopping
 - Going for a hair cut
 - A day off for your child's birthday
 - A parent/carer is too ill to bring their child to school
 - Collecting someone from the airport
 - Visa/passport applications
 - Unapproved holiday (see 'Term time holiday absence' for more details)
- 4.3 Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for absence is considered unsatisfactory, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**. Unauthorised absences are reported to the Local Authority. The school attendance service may contact you and consider taking legal action or issue a fixed penalty fine against you if your child's unauthorised absence continues to be a problem; particularly where absence falls either side of the holidays or patterns appear in attendance.
- 4.4 Where no reason for absence is given and there is no response via text or phone calls, home visits may be made by school staff or the local authority's school attendance officer.

5. Punctuality

- 5.1 Morning registration is at 8.55 a.m. This is the time your child must be in their class. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8.50a.m. at the latest
- 5.2 It is important to be on time for school, as the first few minutes of the first session set the expectations for the whole day and are often used to give out instructions or to organise schoolwork for the rest of the day
- 5.3 If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- 5.4 Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as an unauthorised absence in line with DfE guidance
- 5.5 All lateness is recorded twice a day with the reason and minutes late. This information can be made available to the court as a report if a parent is prosecuted for repeated lateness.
- 5.6 If a child is not collected at the end of the school day and we have had no communication from you, the Local Education Authority policy recommends that we take them to the police station from where you may collect them.
- 5.7 Ensuring good time keeping at both ends of the school day is important for safeguarding purposes. Persistent failure to do so could be considered as neglect.

6. Term time holiday absence

- 6.1 There is no entitlement to time off during term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the headteacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. It is our policy that:
- 6.2 Only in an exceptional circumstance will leave of absence be considered.
- 6.3 Parents who apply for leave of absence in term time must fill in an application form 4 weeks in advance of the leave and **before any booking is made.**
- 6.4 If the school does not authorise a holiday, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine and in certain instances your child may be removed from the school roll.
- 6.4a Any delays to travel or return to school must be documented. Sudden absence due to family emergency or bereavement will need to be documented and travel plans shown to school.
- 6.5 Please remember that any time your child misses school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom regularly.

7. Leavers

- 7.1 If your child is leaving our school (other than at the end of Year 6 to go to high school), parents are asked to give the school office comprehensive information about the transfer, including the date of any move, your new address and telephone numbers (if applicable), your child's new school name, address and telephone number, and the start date when known. This should be given to our school in writing. Please also make sure that our school has your current mobile phone number.
- 7.2 Please be aware that children who have attended our school have a special unique reference number which should be given to your new school.

8. Children missing education

- 8.1 When pupils are absent from school and we do not have information about where they have gone, then the child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services), the police and other agencies to try and locate the child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

9. Legal note

- 9.1 Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance of their child registered at our school (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DfE and the Local Authority.
- 9.2 The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are taken to court and prosecuted or have to pay a fixed penalty fine if absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain the high standards to which we always aspire.

Policy agreed by Governors: Nov 2017
Date of next review: