DISLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

'PROUD TO BELONG'

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by	Jake Nicklin	Date: October 2023
	Governors	Date: October 2023
Last review	September 2022	
Next review	October 2025	

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Attendance will be discussed as part of the safeguarding committee meetings each term and measures and steps that have been taken to promote good attendance will be under constant review

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> 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

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jake Nicklin and can be contacted via the school number - 01663 797332

3.4 Attendance Support

The school buys into the Cheshire East attendance support service who help assist with:

> Monitoring, analyzing and advising on attendance data (see section 7)

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Feeding back on attendance reports to school staff and discussing concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance

> Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office twice per day – morning and afternoon register.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

> Transfer calls from parents to the head teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:40 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an 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 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 if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:30am. Any child arriving after 9:05am, will be recorded as late and any child arriving after 9:30am will be recorded as 'U' (unauthorized). The register for the second session will be taken at: 12:45pm in reception, 1:00pm for KS1 and 1:15pm for KS2.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:40am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

If no one answers the phone, parents/carers are expected to leave a message on the answer phone outlining the name of the child, the date and the reason for the absence.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers 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/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers should contact the school via telephone to advise of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Term-time absence outside of medical appointments should be requested using the absence request forms found on the school website or gained from the school office. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Half-termly reports will be given to class teachers and they will work with families to identifty support to help improve punctuality. If no improvement is seen over a 4 week period, families will receive a letter. If still no improvement is made within 4 weeks, a meeting will take place with the head teacher.

4.5 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/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the local authority's attendance team to discuss concerns and seek further advice

> 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

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels termly via attendance reports. A covering letter will be provided to explain what the expectations are around attendance.

The office staff will also provide class teachers with an attendance record half-termly so class teachers can initiate a meeting if there are any concerns around attendance. However, if a class teacher identifies an issue with attendance prior to the end of the half-term, they can request the attendance certificate and, if warranted, arrange a meeting with the parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns.

If no improvement is seen within 4 weeks, a letter will be sent. If still there is no improvement in the following 4 weeks from the letter, a meeting will take place with the head teacher. If no improvement is seen from this point, the concerns will be passed onto the attendance team in the local authority who will advise further.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off situations (once in a life time events). If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> 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 parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils 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

> Visits to prospective new schools

> External exams or educational assessments

> Approved sporting, cultural or competitive activity

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year – 10 sessions (5 days) or more

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission - 10 sessions (5 days) or more

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will celebrate achievements when an improvement in attendance can be seen.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Monitor attendance of individual pupils where class teachers have recognised a pattern of absence or a substantial amount of time off in comparison to their peers

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the head teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: attendance strategy

We value the importance of attendance at Disley Primary School and strongly encourage all parents/carers to ensure that their children are in school during term time. The more time children have off school, the bigger the impact it has on their education. We strive that every child's attendance should, within reason, be no less than 95% at the end of the year. Please find below the impact absence has on the children's education:

- Children's attendance that falls to 98% have the equivalent of 4 days off over the course of the year.

- Children's attendance that falls to 95% have the equivalent of 9 days/2 weeks off over the course of the year.

- Children's attendance that falls to 92% have the equivalent of 15 days/3 weeks off over the course of the year.

- Children's attendance that falls to 90% have the equivalent of 19 days/4 weeks off over the course of the year.

- Children's attendance that falls below 90% have the equivalent of 29 days/6 weeks off over the course of the year

Please find below the attendance strategy used at Disley Primary School to support good attendance:

- Send termly attendance records, with a covering letter explaining the impact of absence, home for parents/carers

- Give teachers half-termly attendance records so they can analyse their class data and identify any attendance concerns – teachers can request these from the office staff sooner if they have concerns about attendance

- If there are any attendance concerns, class teachers will arrange a meeting with the child/ren's family to see what can be put in place to support the desired improvement. Minutes will be taken and shared at the meeting highlighting the agreed actions

- If no improvement is seen over the course of 4 weeks, a letter will be sent to the family explaining that an improvement needs to be seen in their child/ren's attendance and that they will be monitored closely

- If no improvement is seen within 4 weeks from the letter being sent, a formal meeting will be organized with the class teacher and head teacher to discuss strategies for improving attendance

- If no improvement is seen within 2 weeks, the attendance concerns will be referred to the local authority attendance team who will advise next steps

<u>REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME</u>

The 2013 regulation amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holidays) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. The head teacher and the governing body will determine what the exceptional circumstances are.

FOR COMPLETION BY PARENT/CARER

You have requested the school's permission for the leave of absence to be taken during term time. Before such authorisation is considered please complete the form below and return to the school office. Completion of the form does not guarantee the leave of absence will be authorised.

Student's name…………………………………………………………………………………………………
Year…………………

Dates of leave of absence:
From:……………………………………………….To:…………………………………………………

Please give full reason(s) for asking for leave of absence in term time.

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Signed:………………………………………….Parent/carer Date: …………………………………………

TAKING YOUR CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL WITHOUT THE SCHOOL'S AUTHORISATION MAY RESULT IN THE SCHOOL REQUSTING THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO ISSUE A PENALTY NOTICE TO EACH PARENT/CARER FOR EACH CHILD.

PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
TIMELINE	ONE CHILD	TWO CHILDREN
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent/guardian	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent/guardian	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear in the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure you child's regular attendance.	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance.