



Dale Hall Community Primary Attendance Policy

This policy should be carried out in the context of and in conjunction with Dale Hall CP School's Safeguarding Policy

This policy was adopted by the Personnel Committee meeting held on **19 November 2019** and will be reviewed annually, and at any other time as may be necessary.

1. Introduction

1.1 Dale Hall Community Primary School acknowledges there are clear links between:

Attendance and attainment

Attendance and safeguarding

1.2 Dale Hall Community Primary School is committed to providing a high-quality education for all its pupils. By attending school every day and on time children and young people can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

1.3 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility to ensure good school attendance and all have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.4 This policy applies to all children registered at Dale Hall Community Primary School and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. Dale Hall Community Primary School will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

1.5 Dale Hall Community Primary School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises

that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly”***.

1.6 Dale Hall Community Primary School uses the Local Authority recommended attendance codes. Please see Appendix.

2. Aims & Objectives

2.1 This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

2.2 Throughout this policy Dale Hall Community Primary School aims to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve 100% for all pupils.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to non-statutory school age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- To make explicit Dale Hall Community Primary Schools registration procedures.

3. Registration Procedures

3.1 Registration is an important part of the school day. Dale Hall Community Primary School acknowledges that attendance registers are legal documents, may be presented as evidence in a Court of Law; therefore, all staff undertake to mark registers accurately at all times.

3.2 Morning registration is viewed as a time to welcome pupils into school and help prepare them for the day ahead, as well as an opportunity to explain any changes to the day's usual routines.

3.3 Registers at Dale Hall Community Primary School are taken at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. (8.50am in the morning and 1pm EYFS/KS1 and 1.15PM KS2 in the afternoon)

3.4 Dale Hall Community Primary Schools attendance registers are available for inspection by authorised personnel during normal school hours.

4. School's Responsibilities

4.1 All Dale Hall Primary School staff place a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

4.2 Dale Hall Primary School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:-

- Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising the absence);
- Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- Contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences, and recording the contact;
- Consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern;
- Promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school);
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils and classes.

5. Responsibility of Parents/Carers

5.1 Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Punctuality

5.2 It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that their children arrive to school on time.

The morning register will be called promptly at 8.50 am. Any child arriving after 8.55am but before 9.05am will be marked as late (L). Any child arriving after the registers have closed at 9.05am will be marked as unauthorised late (U).

The afternoon register will be called promptly at 1.00 pm in EYFS and KS1. Any child arriving after 1.00pm but before 1.10pm will be marked as late (L). Any child arriving after the registers have closed at 1.10pm will be marked as unauthorised late (U).

The afternoon register will be called promptly at 1.15pm in KS2. Any child arriving after 1.15pm but before 1.25pm will be marked as late (L). Any child arriving after the registers have closed at 1.25pm will be marked as unauthorised late (U).

All children who arrive after the registers have been called must report to the school office to sign in.

Absences

5.3 It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. You can report your child's absence by calling the school absence line on 01473 251651 Option 1 or email on office@dalehall.suffolk.sch.uk.
- To provide medical evidence, if requested, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am. They

will be contacted again on the second and third day if a valid reason has still not been given.

Illness/Medical Absences

5.4 If a valid reason is not given within 3 days of the absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences of 8 sessions or more will be referred for a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine.

Absence due to illness will be authorised however parents will be asked to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence if the absence is recurring or continues for more than three days. When siblings or friendship groups are absent at the same time these patterns will be monitored and absences may be unauthorised.

If your child has an appointment during school hours please inform the school office, you can do this in person at the office reception, via telephone on 01473 251651 or via email at office@dalehall.suffolk.sch.uk. Medical Evidence should be provided for all medical appointments this can be a copy of an appointment text, a letter or an appointment card. Please submit all medical evidence to the school office.

In the case of a chronic illness or other long term illness issue then a letter or note from the GP or other health professional to state the child is not fit for school or stating the times and days each week the child will be fit for school will be required. This will give clarity to both the school and the child, plus the parent/carer.

The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness or absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday or if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

6. Term-Time Holiday Absences

6.1 Parents/carers are expected to take their child(ren) on holiday during the **14 weeks** school holidays to minimise the impact of their child(ren) missing their education.

6.2 Parents/carers requesting a term time holiday must email or write in to the Headteacher in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head teacher. The DFE states "Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave

request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a **family holiday as a norm**. The child's overall attendance and previous requests will also be taken into account.

6.3 At Dale Hall Primary we understand that certain occupations mean that requesting time off during schools holidays is very difficult so we make an exception for anyone serving in the armed forces, police force, fire service or who work for the NHS. Again, these will be considered on an individual basis and will be dependent on overall absence.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To email or write a letter to the Headteacher, emails must be sent via the school office for the attention of the Headteacher.
- To submit the email or letter in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

7. Fixed Penalty Fines & Court

7.1 A fixed penalty notice fine may be issued when 8 or more unauthorised absence sessions (not necessarily consecutively) have occurred (4 whole days in total). School will give a reminder/warning about attendance when 6 unauthorised sessions have been recorded (3 whole days in total) and then expect to see no further unauthorised absences.

7.2 If parents/carers choose to take their child(ren) on a term-time holiday without the Headteacher's authorisation, the child(ren)'s absences will be marked as unauthorised.

7.3 The penalty notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days; please note this is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (i.e. 2 children, 2 parent/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.

Please note that Second and subsequent unauthorised term-time holidays may be referred to the Local Authority for legal action. In these cases an Education Welfare Officer will be asked to investigate and will decide with the school what the best course of action should be.

8. Absence for Other Reasons

8.1 It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

8.2 When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

8.3 Regular monitoring of all pupil's attendance is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

9. Role of the Education Welfare Officer

9.1 To liaise with the school Attendance Officer and investigate absence which exceeds more than 10% a letter will be sent to these parents as required by the Attendance Officer. The child's attendance will then be closely monitored for 4 weeks and if necessary meetings will be held with these parents.

9.2 To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.

9.3 To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Attendance Service.

10. Persistent Latecomers

10.1 Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after the register has closed are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after the times of registers closing.

10.2 A letter will be sent to parents if a child reaches 4 late marks in the current half term (Please see appendix 2). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who may invite parents to attend a meeting in school to discuss the persistent lateness, this may following or instead of the issue of a fixed penalty fine.

Appendix 1

REGISTER CODES

<i>CODE</i>	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence

O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

Late Attendance Letter

Name of parents/carers
Address

Date

Dear ***Insert name***

Re: Late attendance – **child/childrens name/s**

It is with regret that I am writing to express my concern over the punctuality of your child. ***Insert name/s*** have been late 4 times during the period ***Insert dates***. This is unacceptable as The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. The school day starts at 8.50am and morning registration is called promptly at 8.50am, afternoon registration is called at 1.15pm (KS2) and 1pm (KS1). Therefore children should be in class by then. Any pupils arriving later than these times will need to report to the school office.

Please note that our registers are inspected half termly by the Education Welfare Officer who investigates any persistent lateness.

If you have any difficulty in encouraging your child to attend school on time, or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact the school

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Dedicat
Headteacher

Appendix 3

Percentage Attendance Absence Letter

***Insert parents/carers name
Address***

Insert Date

Dear ***Insert parents/carers names***

I am writing to you regarding ***insert child's name*** attendance this academic year.

Education Welfare Officers from Suffolk County Council visit schools each half term to monitor attendance. If they have concerns regarding an individual pupil's attendance, they will raise this with the school.

At the last visit, the Education Welfare Officer drew attention to the number of absences that ***insert child's name*** has had recently for illness/medical reasons. They have asked us to contact you to make you aware that they are monitoring the situation. The Guide for Parents section of the school Attendance Policy states that "In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate". A copy of this policy is available on the school website.

I am happy to discuss this matter with you further or alternatively the School Nursing team at Whitton Clinic, 01473 242166 are available for parents to talk to.

If the school can be of assistance, please contact me via the school office to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Dedicat
Headteacher

Document History

Date	Description
19 November 2019	Policy completely reviewed and refreshed. Adopted by the personnel committee.

