

Pupil Attendance Policy

DUKE OF NORFOLK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL



(Inc guidance from the DfE (Department for Education) Working together to improve school attendance)

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1 Our School's Vision on Attendance

At the Duke of Norfolk, we recognise that: Improving attendance is everyone's business.

1. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families.
2. The foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment.
3. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. Therefore, at all stages of improving attendance, we will work with pupils, parents, and partner agencies to remove any barriers to attendance by putting the right support in place.
4. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation

2 The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

3 Benefits of good school attendance

As a school we recognise the many benefits that good attendance has on pupils both now and in the future. These include:

- Better academic progress, attainment, and achievement
- Improved mental health
- Higher aspirations
- Better life (career) chances

4 Roles and Responsibilities

At Duke of Norfolk School we:

- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue. We have a designated senior leader (the Head teacher) and an attendance team with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Their responsibilities include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating, and monitoring our expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced
- Maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Recognise and accept our responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.
- Promote the benefits of good attendance at school
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and
- Communicate our expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents
- Systematically analyse data to identify patterns to target improvement
- Work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authority, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Work with families where children may have an additional need that affects their attendance.

This policy is written in line with the school's Equality and Special Educational Needs policy.

5 Working with families

Schools will treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, schools should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic, schools should draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, schools should take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

6 Working with families that are vulnerable and may or may not have additional needs

We recognise that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils will be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

This will involve:

- working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed
- establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and considering whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.

In addition to the benefits for all pupils, good attendance at school also provides an additional safeguard for vulnerable pupils. If a child has a named social worker they must be contacted if there are any attendance concerns.

7 School Information

7.1 The Attendance Team

Esther Bland, Head teacher
Angela Cousen, Attendance Manager
Hollie Pitchford Harrison, Attendance Champion.

7.2 The school Day

The Early Years Department: 8.45am until 3.25pm (register 8.55am)

Year 1 to Year 6: 8.50am until 3.30pm (register 9.00am)

Wrap Around Care: is available from 7.30 am until 8.50am and then 3.20 until 6pm

7.3 What to do if your child is absent

We expect parents to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason. If absence is not recorded and continues without explanation, further contact will be made by school to ensure safeguarding. If a parent cannot be contacted the child will be reported to the local authority as Missing Child on the eleventh day.

7.4 Attendance strategies

At Duke of Norfolk School, we will always endeavour to work with families to secure good attendance and / or positive improvements through informal methods. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. So:

7.5 How do we promote good attendance?

We will celebrate good attendance of the individual, class, and school throughout the school year.

Each week we will present the attendance cup in Thursday JIGSAW assembly to the class with the highest attendance.

Each half term we will present 100% attendance awards in Thursday JIGSAW assembly to those who have achieved it.

Each year we will present 100% attendance awards and prizes in Leavers assembly to those who have achieved it.

Children who suffer with persistent identified medical issues and/ or SEN (Special Education Needs) will not be penalised for time off for appointment and illnesses related to their identified additional need.

Children who struggle with good attendance will be set appropriate targets and incentives.

7.6 What do we do about poor attendance?

When attendance falls below 95%, we will: send a text reminder home.

When attendance is poor 90% or below, we will: write to the parent inviting them to make an appointment with the Head teacher. If contact is not made the Head will make contact through the phone.

7.7 When attendance is poor 85% or below, we will:

INFORMALLY:

- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents (and where appropriate foster carers and/or social workers) to understand why and when the pupil will return. Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code will be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where possible, school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed (every six weeks) and reviewed together with pupils and families.

If the above strategies are not effective, we may follow a more formal approach which may involve:

FORMALLY:

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority Attendance Support Team) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school. This may involve an Early Help Assessment. All these meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to, understand the barriers to attendance, and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.
- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where a pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the

attendance offence or offences, which should usually be the parent or parents with day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.

When the above approaches have not made an impact, the school and or LEA will follow a legal route which may include:

LEGAL ROUTE:

Legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis. If school and Local Authority feel that the above strategies have not engaged the family and / or improved attendance, then a decision will be made to follow a more legal route.

This may include:

Intensifying support through statutory children's social care involvement

Parenting contracts

Education supervision orders

Parenting orders

Attendance prosecution

Taking forward attendance prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

7.8 What we do to tackle persistent absence?

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year) we will work with families to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so we will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and support children and families who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches. This may include:

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for pupils eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers.
- If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g., an education, health, and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).
- A Fixed Penalty notice **applied**

7.9 Granting leave of absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Leave of Absence requests need to be submitted in writing to the Ht. The Head teacher or someone authorised (DHT) should consider each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the head teacher or deputy to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As the head teacher should only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday and attendance will therefore be marked as unauthorised.

If any child is marked as an unauthorised absence for: over 10 sessions (morning/afternoons) = 5 school days in one academic, the matter will be passed to the LEA who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 (per parent).

7.10 What do we do if a child is regularly late?

At Duke of Norfolk, we proactively manage lateness as we recognise the negative impacts being regularly late have on a child's progress and anxiety levels.

In our Early Years Department, the morning register is taken at 8.55 and closes at 9.10. In the rest of the school the morning register is taken at 9am and closes at 9.10.

After these times, the child will be marked as late. After 9.30am the child will be marked as absent for that session.

Afternoon registers are taken at 1pm.

7.11 How do we use attendance data and set targets?

We will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts, and groups (including their punctuality) across the school to help schools achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases
- Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body.

- In all cases, schools and local authorities are expected to make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible.

7.12 Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their additional individual needs. A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should be reviewed regularly and have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

7.13 Relevant legislation

The Education Act 1996

The Children Act 1989

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Sentencing Act 2020

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Appendix A: Summary of Actions

All pupils

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child must be unexpectedly absent (e.g., sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p> | <p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p> | <p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p> | <p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p> |

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p> | <p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p> |

Persistently absent pupils

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p> | <p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p> |
|---|---|--|--|

Severely absent pupils

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p> | <p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children’s social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p> |

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Not applicable. | <p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p> | Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. | Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools. |

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) with poor attendance

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p> | <p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil’s EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p> |

Support for pupils with a social worker

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p> | <p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p> |

Monitoring

| Parents: | Schools: | Academy trustees and governing bodies: | Local authorities: |
|---|--|--|--|
| Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance. | Ofsted considers schools' efforts to improve or sustain high attendance as part of inspections. Multi-academy trusts regularly review attendance data and support schools. | DfE Regions Group considers multi Academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections. | DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction. |

