



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1.0 Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations from 1st September 2013 remove reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

2.0 Aims

This policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- raising awareness of the importance of good attendance;
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences reported by parents will be classified as authorised. The school classifies authorised absence as when:

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause;
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith;
- The child has a medical appointment;
- The child is granted leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. Absence due to holiday is not considered exceptional circumstances.

3.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent or the school believes a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours.

3.3 Children Missing Education

A child who goes missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Damers First School has put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education settings to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future. Whenever a child leaves our school and after making enquiries we are unable to identify, or have not been informed of, a new school or educational provision. The school waits for up to 10 days to see if we are contacted by another school then we will complete a CME form to notify the Local Authority. (For further information see our [Children Missing Education Policy](#))

3.4 DASP Attendance Panel

Within our local partnership of schools (DASP) we follow consistent practices when addressing concerns relating to attendance. Where there is cause for concern parents/ carers will be contacted following the usual school procedures and attendance closely monitored for the next 6 weeks. If attendance has not improved sufficiently - usually at least 95%, parents/carers will be invited to a DASP attendance panel. (See [DASP Attendance Statement – Appendix A](#) and [DASP Attendance Flow Chart – Appendix B](#))

The panel is an opportunity for the school, family and other agencies to meet together to discuss why a child has such high absence rates and to hopefully come up with solutions to any problems. The panel can recommend several outcomes including a further six week period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance, issuing a Penalty Notice, a parenting order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine.

The attendance process is designed to identify poor attendees quickly and address the issues that are affecting their attendance. When attendance improves monitoring will continue and if it falls the attendance process will be resumed.

4.0 Roles

4.1 Parents / carers will:

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness;
- Ensure any child arriving after 8.50 am accesses the school via the main entrance and reports to the school office;
- Contact the school on the first day of any absence before 9.30 am, offering a reason (reasons will only be accepted from parents / carers);
- Contact the school in advance if their child will be absent for any reason (e.g. medical appointment);
- Take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused;
- Work closely with the school and DCC Early Intervention Services to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.

(See [Parent/Carer guide to our attendance policy – Appendix C](#))

4.2 School:

We will positively support school attendance wherever possible and the promotion of good

communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount.

- Teachers will:
 - o Take registration at 8.50am each morning and at 1.00pm each afternoon (This has been adapted slightly as part of our response to the Covid pandemic - registration for Grayling is therefore currently 8.30 am, Meadow 8.40 am and Skipper 8.50 am. This may be subject to change as restrictions ease)
 - o Return registers to the school office by 9.00 am each day. (Registers close at 9.30am each day);
 - o Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act;
 - o Informally approach parents when attendance is low (<95%) for a half term period;
 - o Present attendance records to parents at each parent/carer consultation meeting.

- School Administrators will:
 - o Upload registers each month to school data base;
 - o Contact parents / carers on the first day of any absence if no reason is given by 9.30 am; /ring twice and if no contact made by the end of the day other relatives will be contacted to gain a reason; all calls recorded in attendance contact book;
 - o Record reasons for absence in registers;
 - o Record pre-notified reasons for absence in register;
 - o Record lateness (arriving after 9.00am but 10 minutes after temporary start time listed above if earlier);
 - o Record all messages regarding future absence in registers;
 - o Record lateness with 'u' or 'l' coding as appropriate;
 - o Monitor attendance over each half term period and print off all attendance data for HT;
 - o Monitor punctuality over each half term and notify headteacher of children persistently late (punctuality below 90%).

- The Headteacher/ Attendance monitoring group will:
 - o Ensure attendance is continually reviewed below 95% and contact parent / carer if attendance falls below 90% over a half term period;
 - o Invite parent / carer to school to discuss ways that attendance can be supported and improved if falling below 90%;
 - o Make a referral to the DASP attendance panel where interventions have not resulted in an improvement in attendance within 6 weeks;
 - o Grant applications for leave of absence in term time only in exceptional circumstances.

5.0 Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to provide remote learning or virtual links with the classroom, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to access tuition outside school.

6.0 Repeated unauthorised absences

The governors, supported by the LA and the DASP attendance panel, reserve the right to

consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility to send their children to school on a regular basis.

7.0 Exceptional Circumstance

Each application for leave of absence will be considered on an individual basis by the headteacher. Holidays are not considered as exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

- Attendance at an immediate family wedding, notable family celebration or funeral
- Leave following the return of a lengthy absent parent

All applications for leave of absence during term time must be made on the appropriate form ([Appendix D](#)). Please review the [DASP Attendance Statement](#) for additional guidance.

8.0 Attendance targets

These are agreed by the governors as part of the school improvement plan. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

9.0 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Date effective	September 2021	Approval	LGB
Maintenance	SLT	Role/responsibility	Catherine Smith - Headteacher
Date of next review	September 2022	Date of last update	September 2021