

Damers First School

Our Attendance Policy 2022/23



What is an attendance policy?

Under the Education Regulations 1995 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present. The register must also indicate why a pupil is absent. Our policy aims to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and ensure the school's legal responsibility is met.

What has changed?

Any absence which has not been authorised by your child's school will be recorded as "unauthorised". In line with Dorset Council policy, if a child has 5 days (or 10 sessions) of unauthorised absence within a period of 12 weeks, a penalty notice of £60 per parent may be issued by Dorset Council, which if not paid within 21 days will double to £120. If this remains unpaid, parents will be prosecuted in the magistrates' court.

What is considered to be 'good' attendance?

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning, promoting positive relationships and developing good attitudes to education. Good attendance is considered above 95%, or approximately no more than one day of absence each half term.

What is an acceptable 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. An absence is classified as unauthorised when the school believes a child is away from school without good reason; for example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours. School will not authorise an absence when no prior notice has been given to school, unless in very exceptional circumstances.

Good attendance is essential for your child to achieve academically, emotionally and socially at school

85% attendance results in half a term absence over a year

Good attendance is above 95% (average attendance is 96.5%)

Attendance Percentages

Of pupils who have less than 90% attendance, only 35% achieve 5+ GCSEs including maths and english.

90% attendance over a school career is equivalent to a whole year of absence

Staff and parents will work together to ensure good attendance.

Parents will:

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time
- Ensure any child arriving after the start of school accesses school via the main entrance
- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30 am
- Contact the school in advance if their child will be absent for any reason (e.g. hospital appt.) – please note that it is expected that most dental and doctors appointments will occur outside school hours
- Make any requests for leave of absence on a leave of absence form available from the school office

School will:

- Take registration each morning and afternoon (two sessions per day)
- Consistently record reasons for absence and indicate if absence is authorised or not
- Record an attendance as 'late' ten minutes after the strand registration time (Grayling 8.30am / Meadow 8.40am / Skipper & Chalkhill 8.50am); arrival after 9.30am is deemed 'late after register closes' and is classified as an absence for the morning session
- Contact parents / carers on the first day of any absence if no reason is given by 9.30 am
- Contact parent / carer if attendance becomes a concern (below 90%) and invite parent / carer to school to discuss ways that attendance can be supported and improved
- Ensure that parents are aware if their child's attendance has the potential to become a concern by informing them if it falls below 90%
- Make a referral to the DASP inclusion panel where interventions have not resulted in an improvement in attendance within 6 weeks (see school website for further details of this process)
- School will only grant applications for leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances

Working in Partnership

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. If you have any concerns about your child's attitude to school please talk to your child's class teacher.

How are attendance figures worked out?

A register is taken in school at the beginning of each morning and each afternoon session. A child will receive a 'mark' for each session; these marks are totalled by school and given as a percentage (e.g. if a child attends school all week they will receive 100%; if a child is absent for one day they will have an attendance of 80% for that week).

Attendance figures are therefore calculated solely at two attendance points each day. Therefore, for example, if a child arrives in school in the morning and then leaves school for an appointment at 11.00am and then arrives back in school prior to the start of the afternoon session, the register will show that the child was in attendance for both school sessions.

How is lateness recorded?

If a child arrives 'late' before 9.30am the child will receive a 'late' mark but will be considered as 'attending' the morning session. If a child arrives in school after 9.30am the child is considered to have been 'absent' for the session.