



# **School's Attendance and Absence Policy**

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## Statement of intent

When reviewing this policy, the governing board and head teacher have considered the impact of the scope of the policy on the whole school community. Specifically, they have taken account of the categories used by Sheffield City Council as a public authority to assess impact, as set out below.

### Protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010:

- age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation

### Plus, additional equality groups and interests also recognised by the Council:

- armed forces, \*care experience, health & wellbeing, poverty & financial inclusion, social cohesion, unpaid caring responsibilities and voluntary, community & faith sector

*(\*note – care experience was added in December 2023 and recognises those who are, or who have been, looked-after children. It includes Children Looked After (CLA) who are under the care of the local authority; children and young people who are post-CLA adopted; and those who are leaving, or have previously left, care or adoption arrangements).*

Dobcroft Junior school believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts have in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support

In school the designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sheree Doyle and we have a wider attendance team who all work closely together. Contact details can be found below:

Name	Role in school related to attendance	Contact information
Nicola Sexton	Head teacher responsible for processing leave of absence in term time requests	headteacher@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk

Sheree Doyle	designated senior leader responsible for the implementation of our attendance policy	deputyhead@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk
Andrew Davies	Designated attendance governor	N/A
Louise Fear	Safeguarding Officer and parental link regarding attendance	lfear@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk
Hayley Little	SENDCo responsible for overseeing SEND attendance	hlittle@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk
Amber Higgins	Office lead and link for attendance team	dobcroftfinance@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk

Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact these member of staff for queries or concerns about attendance.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals

- Regularly reviewing attendance data
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing in Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedure
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence

Attendance lead; Sheree Doyle and wider attendance team (individuals named under Statement of Intent) are responsible for :

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers
- Implementing a robust approach to targeting all concerns regarding attendance from low-level to high-level concerns
- Raising the profile and importance of attendance through strategies such as reporting attendance figures to parents and carers termly
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated

Teachers are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- Modelling good attendance behaviour
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day
- Discussing attendance strengths and areas for development during Parents' Evening

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school

- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance

Parents are responsible for:

- The attendance of their children at school
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number
- Updating the school if their details change
- Promoting good attendance with their children
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and at least 20 days in advance
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance

### **3. Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

#### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

#### **Persistent absence (PA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

#### **Missing education**

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

### **4. Attendance expectations**

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **8:55am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time. Pupils will have a morning break at **10:40am**, which will last until **10.55am**, and a lunch break at **12:00pm**, which will last until **1:10pm** – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be taken by **9:05am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:30am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:15pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:30pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

## 5. Absence and monitoring procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **8:55am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence (if none provided, parents will receive a copy of appendix 3 – unexplained absence letter)
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

Please see below action plan relating to different levels pupil of attendance rates:

Pupil's attendance percentage for the whole academic year to date	Actions & Monitoring
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100% - 98%	<p>Individual pupils will receive celebratory communication via the personalised termly attendance update letter</p> <p><u>School celebration of attendance for groups</u> Please also note that as a school, we promote and celebrate strong attendance for groups in order to promote 'Together we make a difference':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher newsletters have a short section which celebrates attendance</li> <li>• Attendance reward trophy to be awarded to classes, on a weekly basis, relating to the attendance focus for the half term</li> </ul>
97.9% - 95%	Communication via the personalised termly attendance update letter
94.9% - 93%	Pupil discussed at half termly attendance meetings and actions decided;
92.9% - 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member of attendance team to gather pupil voice to explore patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.</li> <li>• Telephone parents to have supportive conversation and explore reasons for low attendance and, where relevant, feedback information gathered from pupil voice. Support identified to meet goals / support offered to the family where specific challenges have been identified (for example: a member of the inclusion team to coordinate a meet and greet in order to transition into school).</li> <li>• Set goals with pupil (and where relevant, families) which will motivate and ensure appropriate support is in place.</li> </ul>
89.9% and below (defined by the DfE as persistent absenteeism)	<p>Pupil discussed at half termly attendance meetings and actions decided;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member of attendance team to gather pupil voice to explore patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having</li> <li>• Telephone parents to explain that their child's attendance is currently categorised as persistent absenteeism and a collaborative approach between home and school is needed in order to support improvement. Where relevant, feedback information gathered from pupil voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear support and plans created (eg: leading <b>weekly</b> check-ins to review progress and the impact of support)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Please note that for persistent absentees a staged approach is required in order to facilitate improvement over time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First identification of the pupil meeting this criteria – above actions and a subsequent letter (Letter 1)</li> <li>• Pupil's attendance figure remains a concern (little to no improvement and pupil still meeting this criteria and support needs reviewing) – telephone call to arrange a face-to-face meeting and subsequent letter to follow (Letter 2). Parent meeting to capture strengths and areas for development.</li> <li>• Following the above little to no improvement will result in an additional face-to-face with a parent contract created</li> <li>• Where relevant, the LA Inclusion &amp; Attendance team will be aware and supporting</li> </ul>
Attendance below 50%	The LA Inclusion & Attendance team to support school to create a bespoke plan. School will also consider engaging with the wider agencies and services / children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Please note that while the above actions capture school's response to overall attendance, we will also closely monitor and follow up on punctuality and number of late marks.



The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more, without authorisation, within a 10 week period. Our parents are always offered support with attendance barriers (where relevant). However if there is a lack of engagement with support offered and/or poor attendance persists, the LA may advise school to issue appendix 4 – notice to improve letter.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will inform the Children Missing in Education team and, if the school and LA fail to establish the whereabouts of the child following reasonable enquiries, will remove the pupil from the admissions register.

## 6. Attendance register

The school uses **SIMs electronic management information system** to maintain attendance registers and ensure they are accurate. The school will ensure these attendance registers can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Teachers will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day (by 9:05am) and at the start of the afternoon session (by 1:15pm)**. The office team will then process the morning registration marks by 9:30am and the afternoon registration marks by 1:30pm. The office team will then follow actions detailed in the daily absence procedure flowchart (Appendix 1).

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available

- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## **7. Authorising parental absence requests**

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be processed by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is final; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents.

### **Leave of absence**

The school will only grant pupils a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, parents must submit the leave of absence request form (Appendix 2), available via email or from the school office at least 20 days in advance of the proposed first day of absence. Parents must provide the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would occur. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

If term-time leave is not granted, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice.

### **Illness and healthcare appointments**

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

### **Performances and activities, including paid work**

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **96 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

### **Religious observance**

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance as far in advance as possible (**one week in** advance if possible as a minimum).

The school will accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

## **8. SEND- and health-related absences**

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help improve attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments
- Incorporating a support plan
- Explore strengths and difficulties
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework
- Using an internal or external specialist
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out
- Temporary late starts or early finishes
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs

## 9. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to go to their classes at **8:55am** and **1:10pm**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the **school office** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. School will take immediate action to locate the child as per daily absence procedures flowchart (Appendix 1). If truancy has occurred, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 10. Absent pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform a member of SLT immediately

- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- The teacher will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by SLT
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All toilets
  - All classrooms
  - All breakout spaces
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- If pupil not located, available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted
- The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

## **11. Attendance intervention**

In order to implement our attendance strategy and colour coded actions (please section 5) school will also work with the following approach:

### **Assess & Identify**

- Pupil voice gathered to explore barriers to strong attendance
- Parent voice gathered to explore barriers to strong attendance
- School to pose potential strategies to analyse which would be most beneficial and have the most impact for the specific child
- Attendance team identify and discuss all pupils whose attendance is below 95%

### **Plan**

- establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance

### **Do**

- Implement the relevant actions related to the child's specific situation (eg: colour coding of the current attendance figure to date) Examples of key actions are:
  - Celebrating and promoting strong attendance
  - Telephoning parents
  - Reporting to parents termly
  - Sending letters to parents
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams
  - Using fixed penalty notices

### **Review**

- monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work
- Lead half termly attendance review meetings
- A member of the attendance team to make regular contact with family to discuss progress
- Attendance team will monitor and review all pupils whose attendance has fallen below 95% within an academic year (and school has therefore contacted the family). If the child's attendance figure improves, the child will receive a positive postcard from a member of the attendance team

## **12. Working with parents to improve attendance**

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Safeguarding Officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Safeguarding Officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

## 13.

## Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 14.

## Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance team will follow the actions described in section 5.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

### Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

## **15. Monitoring and analysing absence**

The attendance team will monitor and analyse attendance data half termly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding attendance figures to date, punctuality, and authorised / unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups
- Individual pupils
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND and pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium
- Pupils at risk of PA

The attendance team will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a **half-termly and end of year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes
- Particular days of poor attendance
- Historic trends of attendance and absence
- Barriers to attendance

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

## **16. Training of staff and staff communication**

The attendance team will provide weekly and daily reports (this will be displayed for staff in a central area) to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it



Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

**17.**

## **Monitoring and review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **97 percent** – full details of the whole school attendance levels can be found on the **Headteacher's half termly newsletter**.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders

## Appendix 1 – Daily absence procedure flowchart

Have you reported a reason for your child's absence (which is in line with NHS guidance) before 9:30?

Yes, the reason provided is clearly in line with NHS guidance

No further action needed, this absence will be recorded as authorised.

Yes but the reason for your child's absence is unclear (e.g. my child is unwell) or the reason is not in line with NHS guidance (see is my child too ill to attend school?')

- If your communication has come via email or voicemail, a member of the school office team will call you back to establish more detail.
- If the additional detail established that the reason is in line with NHS guidance, no further action needed, this absence will be recorded as authorised.
- If the additional detail given does not clearly establish that the reason for absence is in line with NHS guidance in terms of being absent from school, the office team will have a supporting conversation with you regarding any strategies or adaptations which school could make to better enable your child to access school
- If you decide to keep your child off school, the updated government guidance states that school is no longer able to authorise this absence
- On the following day of absence, the school office team would repeat the absence communication outlined above

No, you have not provided a reason for your child's absence

- School would initially send you a text message prompting you to notify us with a reason for absence
- If we have not had a response by 9:30am, a member of the office team will call a parent or carer
- If school are unable to reach you, we will leave a message and reattempt to call both parents or carers at 10:30am
- If we have not had a response by 1:30pm, school will call the third listed contact
- If school are still unable to establish the whereabouts of your child, a member of the school team will conduct a home visit
- Beyond this, school will escalate attempts to establish the child is safe and well (for example: by speaking with neighbours)
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will inform the Children Missing in Education team

**Appendix 2 – leave of absence request form**



**Dobcroft Schools- Leave of absence in term time request form**

**Dobcroft Infants/Junior School**



<p>Name: <input style="width: 80%;" type="text"/></p> <p>class: <input style="width: 60%;" type="text"/></p> <p>Year: <input style="width: 60%;" type="text"/></p> <p>Siblings in this or other schools (name, DOB, school attending) :</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Name and address of parent or carers:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Telephone number:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Mobile number:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>Requested dates of absence from and to (inclusive):</p> <p>From: _____ To: _____</p>		
<p>Outline the exceptional circumstances that require your request for leave of absence during term time:</p>  <p>What steps have you taken to minimise the impact of the leave on your child's learning:</p>  <p>Emergency Contact Details (UK and Abroad) – name, telephone number &amp; relationship:</p> <p>UK:</p> <p>Abroad:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I confirm that the information on this form is true</li> <li>I agree to keep school informed of any changes to my travel arrangements or if my child is unable to return to school on to due date</li> <li>I am aware that I may be fined and/or prosecuted for any time which my child is absent from school that has not been authorised by the Headteacher</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Signed by Parent/carer</b></p>   	<p><b>Print name &amp; relationship to child</b></p>   	<p><b>Date</b></p>   



Dear parent/carer(s) of .....

RE: Child/ren's name

We have reason to believe that you have taken your child/ren out of school without agreement of the head teacher during the period ..... to ....

Please could you provide evidence of the reasons for absence to school by ....., failure to do so may result in school referring the information to the Local Authority for a penalty notice to be issued for unauthorised leave in term time.

We are committed to working together with parents and carers regarding any barriers related to attendance so please get in touch if this absence is something that we need to discuss further in order to support your child.

Kind regards,  
Dobcroft Junior School Office

## **Appendix 4 – Notice to improve**

Dear ...,

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996.

You, «**FORENAME**» «**SURNAME**» are a parent/carer of «**Students\_Name**», (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at «**School\_Name**».

The school have offered support to you and your family to try and help improve «Students\_Name's» attendance, including: [**Evidence of support in line with Attendance Legal Process checklist.**]

Unfortunately, despite the support that was offered to your family, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between «**WARNING\_START\_DATE**» and «**WARNING\_END\_DATE**» the pupil failed to attend regularly at «**School\_Name**», which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absences being recorded. Please see the attached registration certificate for details.

**You now have x school days (x weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a Penalty Notice may be issued. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. You will be given the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days for a first offence.**

If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please contact our team as soon as possible:

Contact Name

School & Address

Telephone:

Yours sincerely