

Dinting Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Attendance Policy

Policy No:3

Rationale

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 development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (pupil registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are 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 the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Pupils with Special Education Needs may require different start and finish times dependent upon individual needs but all other arrival and registration requirements still apply, (e.g. they will be recorded as late if arrival is 10 minutes after their arrival time.)

Arrival and Registration

- All children should be ready to come into school at **8.50am** each day. The register is taken twice a day at 9.00am and 1.00pm. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- Morning registration ends at 9.10am. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked in as Late. After 9.30am this will become an unauthorised absence. Registers are returned to the office by 9.15am with absences and lates recorded. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00pm.

- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/carer outside the normal hours are signed in or out from reception. The signing in/out register is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.
- Where a reason for a child's absence has not been received at school by 10.00am the parents/carers will be contacted.

Illness and Medical Appointments

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate for the duration of the absence.
- If a child has a serious medical condition or need that requires appointments in school time, providing the appointment letters are shown to school the child's overall attendance will not be affected, this includes appointments for speech therapy.

Definitions

Authorised Absence – An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence – An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher

If a child is absent

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.

- The school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer by 10.00am, if no message has been received regarding the reason for absence.
- Parents are, however, expected to email or telephone the school by 9.00am on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.

Leave of Absence

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term –time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- Leave of absence during term time will only be granted under exceptional circumstances. Permission for absence in term time may only be granted for compassionate reasons and approved educational experiences at the Headteacher’s discretion.
- Where the leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, a letter to request the absence must be submitted to the Headteacher, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil’s previous school attendance. When a request is not authorised, parents have the right of representation to the School Governors.
- If leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Welfare will be notified.
- You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised.

To have a holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper than during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Penalty Notices for Holidays

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- The Headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if they pay within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is the obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.
- Penalty Notices are issued to **each** parent, for each child.
- Where overall attendance is above 96% over the previous 12 months, calculated from the week after the holiday absence, penalty notices will not be issued.

Monitoring attendance

Monthly a record of the monthly percentage will be reviewed and kept.

Termly (6 times a year)

School registers will be inspected by the Headteacher and parents contacted in the event of:

- a) Unauthorised absence
- b) Frequent short absences, particularly where pattern emerges; e.g. every Friday
- c) Persistent lates
- d) The term attendance falls below 95%.

Contact will be made by:

- a) A letter sent to parents informing of school's concern
- b) Contact inviting parents to meet with Headteacher to discuss concerns

- c) Referral to multi agency team, who implements education welfare service.

A record of all concerns, correspondence and meetings will be kept in attendance file

Rewards for good attendance

The school promotes good attendance with all its stakeholders. 100% per term (6 times a year) is rewarded with a special reward and 100% per year is rewarded with a special outing to be decided annually by all staff. 100% attendance is considered alongside the school behaviour records, there is an expectation that children receiving the special 100% reward will not have contravened the school behaviour policy during the academic year. Good attendance and good behaviour are essential to receive the special reward. All children whose annual attendance falls between 99.1%-100% will receive a gold medal, 97.1-99% a silver medal and 95.7-97% a bronze medal. A special attendance assembly will be held in July each year to give out medals. Good attendance features regularly on the weekly newsletter.

Attendance targets

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the Headteacher, the chair of governors and the LA school improvement partner at the annual SIRR review. The Headteacher will report on attendance in the termly report to governors. A nominated governor will meet with the Headteacher annually to discuss attendance percentages.

Monitoring and reviewing

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.
- The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is implemented.
- The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's 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.

- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the day, they will contact the school office immediately.
- Termly monitoring will look at the attendance of the whole school, of each class and different groups of pupils.
- Individuals who are below 95% are monitored closely, letters alerting parents are issued termly (6 times a year) and any pupil with attendance of less than 85% are the subject of an attendance review with the Headteacher and their parent/carer. Following the meeting an action plan is drawn up, and a further review done after 6 weeks. Immediate referral to the EWO then takes place if no improvement or effort to improve is seen.

Date agreed by staff: 2nd October 2017
 Agreed by Governors 5th October 2017

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| May 2012 | Policy Updated |
| September 2012 | Changes to the Reward system |
| July 2013 | Updated due to Department for Education amendments to regulations regarding school attendance , 1 st September 2013 |
| July 2014 | Amendments to link good attendance with good behavior. |
| July 2015 | Approved- no amendments |
| September 2016 | Amendments to penalty notice following Isle of Wight High Court ruling May 2016.Attendance display no longer used and certificates not given out termly. |
| February 2017 | Amendments to term time leave |
| September 2017 | Update following supreme court judgement 6.4.17. |

