



Dobcroft Junior School Attendance Policy

Reviewed: October 2022

Review Date: October 2025

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sheree Doyle and can be contacted via deputyhead@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk

Telephone: 0114 2368075

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Communicating and checking in with the office team daily regarding attendance
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with relevant external professionals to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Bethany Jones and can be contacted via bjones@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk

Telephone: 0114 2368075

3.5 Class teachers

- › Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:10 am.
- › They are responsible for noting on CPOMs if a pupil is persistently late or they have concerns regarding attendance.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents to Bethany Jones in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- › Record any concerns relating to attendance on CPOMs
- › Record any concerns relating to punctuality on CPOMs
- › Communicate with Bethany Jones on a daily basis regarding attendance issues

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:55 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- › We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- › Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55 am on each school day.
- › The register for the first session will be taken between 9am and 9:10 am and will be kept open until 9:25 am.
- › The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15 pm and will be kept open until 1:45 pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:55 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Telephone 0114 2368075

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and has provided evidence of the appointment.

Parents should inform the school office of any planned appointments along with the evidence (for example evidence of the text or email appointment) via email enquiries @dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk or via telephone-0114 2368075. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- › If a pupil is identified as being regularly late, the attendance officer (Bethany Jones) will make contact with family to discuss and offer any relevant support. In the event of the situation not improving, the designated member of the senior leadership team will be alerted to offer further support.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may take further measures such as call the children missing in education team, carry out a home visit, call the police.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- › Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an external professional.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at the end of every term.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as significant unforeseen circumstances which the headteacher will review on a case by case basis. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 14 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website <https://www.dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk/page/forms/40453> or from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments for ongoing significant health reasons. Please note that school will not authorise routine checkups. (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- › Time to attend a funeral
- › Time to attend a special 'one off' occasion such as a parent's graduation ceremony
- › Time to attend a specific examination (e.g. a music exam, sporting competition at a specialist level) which cannot be taken at any other time

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Regularly attend all training and use the latest research and best practice to inform strategies, including:

- › There will be a termly assembly led by the Headteacher to highlight the importance of good attendance
- › Class teachers will maintain a high profile of attendance by regularly discussing their attendance figures and the significance of this.
- › We advertise the importance of attendance and punctuality throughout school, in newsletters and on notice boards.

- › We share messages about attendance in assemblies and in class
- › Staff have individual check ins with children around attendance and punctuality
- › We recognise the importance of developing strong relationships with families to challenge and support attendance. We include pupil and family voice to consider how to support individuals.
- › We share information 'days lost' and the impact this has on educational attainment
- › We share attendance information with families including sending letters of concern where appropriate (appendix 2)
- › We meet with wider partners to support families to improve attendance
- › The leadership team will meet with families to discuss barriers to improving attendance and punctuality
- › We consider individual support that can be put in place including reward charts, meet and greet, providing resources like an alarm clock, etc.

Our desired outcome is;

For every child to be in school every day, and on time.

- › To reach this outcome, we must support all children.
- › We need to support our 100% attenders to remain 100% attenders.
- › We need to support our 96%-99% attenders to raise their attendance and get as close to 100% as possible.
- › We need to challenge our 90%-96% attenders, to remind parents of their duty to ensure their child is in full time education and offer support to prevent further absences in the future.
- › We follow a graduated approach for our irregular attenders to ensure we assess why they are not attending regularly, create a plan to support improvement in attendance, implement the plan and review to see if improvements have been made.

Assess

When assessing why pupils are not attending regularly we:

- › Consider the reasons preventing the child attending regularly
- › Consider all of a pupil's needs across Education, Health and Care
- › Ensure the child's voice has been captured, what do they need to happen so they can attend?
- › Evaluate what has already been implemented to improve the child's attendance?
- › What support is required to improve the attendance?
- › What interventions may be required to improve the child's attendance?
- › What further assessments may be required?
- › Set time scales for assessments to be carried out

Plan (Voluntary Support)

When planning how to improve an individual's attendance we consider the following:

- › What next steps need to take place to help the young person attend every day, on time?
- › Who will support and what their actions are?
- › Set time scales for the plan to be implemented
- › What outcomes do we expect to see?

- › Ensure the plan is shared with all parties including the child
- › Ensure the plan is carried out by all professionals, the family, and the young person

Review

Timely reviews will take place and consider to following:

- › Has the support worked, does the child and family feel they have been supported?
- › Are we seeing movement towards the desired outcomes, even small improvements can be big steps?
- › Has there been any party who hasn't carried out their actions?
- › Has the child's voice been captured, how do they feel the last few weeks have gone, what difference has been made, what are they proud of, what could have been better?

Formalised Support

- › Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with we will consider formalising support through the use of a parenting contract.
- › We will inform the safeguarding governor.
- › If families do not engage with any informal or formal support then we will seek the advice and support of our Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker.

7. Attendance monitoring

- › Daily communication takes place between Bethany Jones and the office team.
- › All relevant staff (office team, SLT, classteachers) report attendance concerns on CPOMs.
- › Bethany Jones responds to all concerns raised relating to attendance.
- › Half termly meetings take place with Bethany Jones, Sheree Doyle and Amber Higgins to analyse attendance data and strategically plan how to improve attendance of identified individual pupils and pupil groups. Strategies include: phone calls, letters (graduated response), engaging with relevant agencies eg Pathways, primary attendance and inclusion team.
- › Outcomes of this meeting are reported to the head teacher.
- › Monitoring of specific pupils is undertaken daily by Bethany Jones
- › Termly attendance data and reports are presented to the governing board

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to classteachers (prior to each parents' evening), and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Communicate with parents/carers as soon as attendance concerns are identified
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated every three years by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------|---|
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |

| Unauthorised absence | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |