



ST DUNSTAN'S, CHEAM, C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy Subject: Attendance

Date: January 2023

Review Date: January 2026

Vision Statement

'St Dunstan's – a thriving Christian school, guided by the Good Shepherd, founded on faith, inspiring the best in everyone.'

At St Dunstan's we celebrate:

- Excellent achievement and progress in all that we do
- Learning for life in all its fullness
- Christian values alive within our school
- Being at the heart of our community

Aims:

The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend school regularly in order for them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available and for each individual pupil to realise his / her true potential. As a school we will promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence and ensure that we act early to address any patterns of absence.

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'. School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, [DfE September 2018](#).

Statutory Duty:

The Education Act 1996 and 2002 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in

the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Definition of Authorised/Unauthorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence (e.g. illness) N.B. **Only the Head Teacher may give approval in advance for absence.**

Unauthorised absence is absence without the school's permission or where absence is unexplained or unjustified.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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

Guidelines for effective implementation of Attendance Policy:

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure that each pupil attends school regularly and punctually, and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

The **school** will ensure that

- **Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently** (See Appendix 1)
- **Parents or carers are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised.** Class teachers are expected to follow up cases in which a proper explanation of absence is not forthcoming. This may involve making contact with the parents to clarify why their child was absent. When the authenticity of the explanation is doubted, or a satisfactory explanation is not received, the matter should be referred to the Head teacher or Deputy Head Teacher
- **Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored regularly.** This is the responsibility of the Deputy Head Teacher who will check the registers on a regular basis and follow up cases of poor attendance or persistent lateness. The Deputy Head will liaise with class teachers and the Head teacher to decide how best to remedy any problems. The attendance of St. Dunstan's pupils is also monitored by an Attendance Officer from the LA. Where significant concerns arise, school staff work closely with the Attendance Officer to help parents to meet their responsibilities
- **Persistent Absence** It is important that parents are made aware that their child is persistently absent. Since September 2015 the Department for Education have changed the Persistent Absence (PA)
- Threshold from 85% to 90% attendance. Therefore any child whose attendance drops below 90% is considered to be a Persistent Absence pupil. A letter is sent to the parent/carer informing them that their child is PA and inviting them into school to discuss the situation
- **School attendance statistics are reported.** Attendance statistics are calculated by the LA and submitted to the DfE annually as required for the compilation of National Absence Tables.
- Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years.

Pupils will be encouraged to attend school regularly and to be punctual.

It is hoped that **Parents/Carers** will;

- **support the school** in encouraging good attendance and high standards of punctuality

- **inform the school on the first day of non-attendance**
- **inform the school immediately if the pupil has a notifiable disease** e.g. salmonella, ‘slapped cheek’ (Parvovirus), chicken pox or German Measles.
- **discuss any planned absences with the school in advance (e.g. family holidays, special occasions)** – see Appendix 2/3

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

In all cases, on the child’s return to school, **parents should send a written note explaining the reason for absence.**

NB For any child who comes to school unaccompanied, parents MUST inform the school by 8.45am on the first day of non-attendance.

Request for Leave of Absence

Parents are asked **not** to request leave during term time. A directive from the DfE states quite clearly that no parent can demand leave as a right. Absence from school could place a child in academic difficulty. It interrupts the flow of teaching and learning in the classroom. Staff cannot repeat work as there is not time to do so and it would be unfair to those children who do not take leave during school time. Changes to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

which came into force in September 2016 make it clear that any leave of absence in term time should only be granted in ‘exceptional circumstances’. Any leave taken where prior permission has not been sought and without head teacher

approval will be marked as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.

If it is genuinely not possible to take leave during the school holidays, under regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulation 1981, the Headteacher has a **discretionary** power to grant leave during term time. The Headteacher will carefully consider the request based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. A **Leave of Absence** form should be submitted to the Headteacher **at least two weeks prior** to the intended period of absence with an accompanying letter of explanation. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. School examinations take place during May (dates of Key Stage 2 SATs appear in the school newsletter). It is most important that there is 100% attendance during that period. Governors have agreed that request for leave during SATs testing will **not** be authorised.

Extended Leave

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 state that where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and that failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name may, following consultation with the LA, be deleted from the admission register.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

In drawing up this policy, reference was made to the following documents:

- School Attendance. Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.

School Attendance Regulations

- Information for Parents Attendance and Absence
- Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools – Please see Appendix 2 Attendance Codes
- www.legislation.gov.uk
- The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 as amended 2016

Please note that this policy is linked with the [Child Protection](#) and [Safeguarding](#) Policies

Appendix 1

Marking the Attendance Register (Electronic Register)

Guidance Notes

- Registers must be marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Every pupil should be marked at every registration whether in attendance or absent. Blanks **must not** be left.
- The registers must be saved promptly on SIMS after registration.
- Pupils who are late will have to be signed in and the office will record their lateness as appropriate.

N.B. The Governors have decided that the registers should be kept open for thirty minutes from the beginning of registration i.e. at the start of the school day, a child who arrives after 9.15 a.m. will not be credited with that morning's attendance.

- A note from parents/carers does not **authorise** a pupil's absence. **Only the Head Teacher can authorise an absence.** If in doubt about the plausibility of an explanation, please consult the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.
- The absence of pupils taking part in supervised educational activities outside the school is recorded as **approved educational activity**. This is equivalent to "present" for performance table purposes.
- See Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes

**ST DUNSTAN'S CHEAM C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL
REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING SCHOOL TERM TIME DUE TO
EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

A letter should accompany this form stating why it is necessary to request leave during term time.

Names(s) of Child(ren) Class

..... Class

..... Class

I request permission for the above to be absent from school

on/between and

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Parents are asked **not** to request leave during term time. A directive from the DFE states quite clearly that no parent can demand leave as of right. Absence from school could place a child in academic difficulty. It interrupts the flow of teaching and learning in the classroom. Staff cannot repeat work as there is not time to do so and it would be unfair to those children who do not take leave during school time. Changes to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force in September 2016 make it clear that any leave of absence in term time should only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances'. Any leave taken where prior permission has not been sought and without head teacher approval will be marked as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.

ST DUNSTAN'S, CHEAM, C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Request for leave of absence from school has been authorised

Leave will be unauthorised

Signed Date

Appendix 2: 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