



# Attendance Policy

<b>Policy Review Date</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2025</b>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Governing Body on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>
<b>Next review date:</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> March 2027</b>
<b>Person/s responsible:</b>	<b>Senior Leadership Team</b>

# Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Legal Framework	3
3. Roles and Responsibilities	3
4. Why is Regular Attendance Important	5
5. Understanding Types of Absence	6
6. Absence Procedure	6
7. Attendance and Safeguarding	7
8. Requesting Evidence	7
9. Requesting Absences	7
10. SEND and Health Related Absences	8
11. Persistent Absentees	9
12. Punctuality	9
13. The EWO (Education Welfare Officer)	9
14. School Attendance Targets	10
Appendix 1: Absence Procedures Flow Diagram	11

## 1. Introduction

Danegrove Primary School aim to provide high quality education in a safe and caring environment so that all pupils are able to reach their full potential during their time with us. We endeavor to ensure that children leave Danegrove with positive feelings about education and its value to them. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, your child should be at school on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We take a whole-school approach to achieving good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas, such as the curriculum, behaviour, bullying, SEND support and mental health and wellbeing support can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- promoting and modelling regular attendance
- ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- 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 may require more support with attendance and put strategies in place.

## 2. Legal Framework

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

- [Education Act 2011](#)
- [Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023](#)
- [Child Performance and Activities Licensing Legislation in England 2015](#)
- [Children and Young Persons Act 2008](#)
- [DfE 'School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' 2024](#)
- [DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'](#)
- [DfE 'Children missing education' 2024](#)

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

**The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Mrs A. Weekes - Attendance & Admissions Officer

Mrs K. Stevens – Learning Mentor

Mrs F. Ghossieri – Assistant Head teacher/Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead

Miss L. Oliver - Head teacher

Ms E. Armer – Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Educational Welfare Officer – as assigned by LB Barnet

The governing body 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
- ensuring that staff receive adequate training on attendance
- regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing and challenging trends
- ensuring that this policy 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.

The Head teacher 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 be the school's Senior Attendance Champion
- making sure all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence

The SLT are responsible for:

- ensuring that the attendance policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- the overall strategic approach to attendance in school
- developing a clear vision for improving attendance
- making sure that staff are aware of the school's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures
- making certain that all staff know that children absent from education and missing education can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues
- analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement
- monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- benchmarking attendance data against local, regional and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement

Staff are responsible for:

- modelling good attendance behaviour
- promoting and celebrating both good attendance and improved attendance
- promoting and celebrating punctuality
- using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- ensuring that all attendance registers are accurate and up to date
- recording and coding all absences and lates correctly
- communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance
- following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance
- following up on repeated concerns regarding punctuality
- producing attendance/absence/punctuality statistics/reports and analysing accordingly
- informing the Senior Attendance Champion, DSL and/or members of SLT of pupils causing concern
- informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers

Parents are responsible for:

- providing accurate and up-to-date contact details

- providing the school with a minimum of two emergency contacts
- updating the school if their details change
- promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children
- informing the school of an absence by 8:30am on the first morning of the absence, and continuing to inform the school daily until the child returns to school

#### **4. Why is regular attendance so important?**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines, which in turn may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

#### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

#### **To help support regular attendance we will:**

- give you details on attendance in our monthly newsletters
- report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- have prominent attendance signage around the school to support our initiative – Attendance H.E.R.O.
- promote attendance on our website
- celebrate good attendance by, having an attendance display on both sites that celebrates the best attended class – HEROES UNITE
- proudly wear the HEROES UNITE superhero cape and mask (teacher of the winning class) for the week
- reward 100% attendance (both termly and yearly) through individual, class certificates and prizes/rewards
- celebrate children that have improved their attendance
- celebrate half termly, the class with the most improved attendance
- ensure that supporting children to attend school is part of our mental health and wellbeing curriculum
- where appropriate, offer a place in the school's breakfast club
- support our families where attending school for children may be difficult

#### **How You Can Help**

Whilst children may be off school because they are ill, it also happens that children can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is essential that you do not cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and might make attending school even more difficult for a child.

#### **You can support your child by:**

- ensuring regular and early bed times
- helping with homework
- having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- providing a healthy breakfast
- reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- retaining open and honest communication with the school
- being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates
- encouraging your child to talk about their day and celebrate with them the positives of being in school.

- by not taking day trips/holidays in term time

## 5. Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why informing the school by **8.30am for each day of an absence** with a reason is essential.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

For medical appointments, parents/carers need to provide proof of the appointment in advance. If it's an emergency appointment at any medical profession, please request an attendance card as proof.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

**This includes:**

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- birthdays, shopping, looking after other children
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the Head teacher
- excessive illness without medical evidence

The Head teacher reserves the right to exercise their final discretion based on the evidence provided.

## 6. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, contact us as soon as possible on the **first day of absence** and **by no later than 8.30am**. You must then continue to contact us daily until your child returns to school.

You can contact the school to inform us of an absence by:

- phoning the absence line on 0208 449 4024, select option 1
- emailing [attendance@danegrove.barnetmail.net](mailto:attendance@danegrove.barnetmail.net), giving your child's full name, class and the reason for the absence
- speaking directly to the Attendance and Admissions Officer
- speaking directly to a member of the administrative team, who will ensure that the information is passed to the Attendance and Admissions Officer

Please **do not report absences on Google classroom**, as this may not be checked by the class teacher during the school day.

**If your child is absent we will** follow the procedure set out below:

- If we have not heard from you then we will telephone you on the first day of absence through our automated truancy system asking you to give a reason for absence.
- If no contact has been made via the truancy system, then the Attendance & Admissions Officer will try to contact parents/carers directly to ascertain why a child is absent. If still no contact has been made, then a message will be left for the parent/carer to contact the school.

- If, on day two, there is still no contact with a parent/carer then we will phone **all the contact numbers that we hold** in order to determine why a child is absent from school.
- If towards the end of day two we have not been able to establish any contact with the family, then on the afternoon of day two (2:30pm onwards) we will make a home visit to ensure that the pupil is safe and not at risk of harm.
- If when visiting the home no contact with the child is established the school will then contact the appropriate authorities (social services/police etc.) to seek further advice on how to safeguard the child.
- If absences become a concern then we will invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance & Admissions Officer, Class teacher, Learning Mentor or an Assistant Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher. If absences continue to persist then a meeting will be made with the Head teacher.
- If attendance falls below 90% the school will refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer at Barnet Council.
- Please refer to Appendix A (Absence procedures including persistent absentees) for a breakdown of the internal procedures for absences.

## 7. Attendance & Safeguarding

In accordance with the absence procedure stated above, it should be noted that a **home visit will only occur to ensure that children are safe and are not at risk of harm**. To support with this, we **very strongly advise** parents/carers to phone when their child is absent. If the school has had contact with a parent/carer then a home visit will not be necessary.

### Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents whether it be in an emergency or about absence, therefore, we need to have **at least two up to date contact numbers** at all times. Please ensure that if you, or one of the other contacts, change a mobile number or home number that the school is informed immediately.

## 8. Requesting Evidence

- **Illness** - 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.
- **Medical Appointments** – the school will request evidence of appointments attended during the school day, including those that mean a child arrives late to school.
- **External exams/sporting events/theatre performances** etc. – the school will expect to see relevant paperwork in relation to children attending events that have not been organised directly by the school.
- **Travel arrangement delays/cancellations** – the school will request evidence of cancelled flights/changes to travel arrangements that are beyond the control of the parent/guardian.

## 9. Requesting Absences

### Medical appointments

Parents are 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.

### Religious Observance

The school will only 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 will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

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

### **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).

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 Head teacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.

The Head teacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **95%**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Head teacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

### **Exceptional Leave**

**We understand that at times emergencies may occur, requiring parents to request exceptional leave – taking your child out of school to go on a day trip, holiday or to visit relatives is NOT exceptional leave.** Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school time to go on holiday. If parents wish to request exceptional leave then requests must be in writing at least two weeks prior to the leave and an exceptional leave form completed with flight proof/travel information provided for both the pupil and parents/carers.

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 Head teacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is unlikely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Where a pupil's attendance is already below 90%
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods

The Head teacher's decision on whether an exceptional leave request will be authorised is final. **If the request is not agreed and you take your child out of school then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices are issued per parent/per child for each child's absence. If unauthorised leave is repeated the Educational Welfare Team may issue a summons for each parent/carer to Court.

## **10. SEND and Health-related Absences**

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate 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 SEND 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 support attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health and wellbeing, parents will be contacted to discuss the concern, and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. If staff have a concern in relation to a child's mental health they will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will then pay due regard to procedures as set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 11. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'Persistent Absentee' when they miss 10% (attendance is 90% or below) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason, **even if the absence has been explained**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly, any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absentee mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority, and parents will be informed accordingly. Persistent Absentee pupils are tracked and they are discussed in the monthly meetings that the school has with the Education Welfare Officer from Barnet Council.

We are aware that some children may require additional support, if this is the case then it will be provided by our Learning Mentor or our Assistant Head teacher for mental health and wellbeing, and may include individual incentive programmes and participation in wellbeing activities.

## 12. Punctuality

Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and vital information and news for the day. Arriving late into class is not only embarrassing for your child, but also disrupts lessons and the education of other pupils. For some children regularly arriving late can mean they would prefer not to attend at all (embarrassment, missing out on learning etc.) and therefore their absence rate could increase.

### How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at:

- **Ridgeway Avenue (RA) - 8:45am**, the gate opens at 8:30am and classroom doors open by 8.40am at the latest.
- **Windsor Drive (WD) - 9:00am**, the gates open at 8:45am and children are able to go straight into class (soft start).

All children **are expected** to be in the classroom by 8:45am (RA) or 9:00am (WD) accordingly, this is when registers are taken and the school day begins.

- Children arriving after 8:45am on Ridgeway Avenue or 9:00am on Windsor Drive must be brought, by an adult, to the main reception and **will be marked as late**.
- Please note that the Ridgeway Avenue gate closes at 8:50am, the Cat Hill gate (WD site) at 9:00am and the Windsor Drive gate at 9:05am
- In accordance with regulations, **if your child arrives after 9:05 (RA) or 9:20 (WD)** they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but **this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists
- If your child is persistently late then you will be asked to meet with the Attendance & Admissions Officer, Class teacher, Learning Mentor or an Assistant Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher. Please note that persistent lateness may also be referred to the Education Welfare Officer at Barnet Council.

**Please do reach out and ask for support if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.**

## 13. The EWO (Educational Welfare Officer)

In the first instance, parents/carers are expected to contact the school and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer.

Children will be referred to the EWO if:

- their attendance falls below 90% (with unauthorised absence)
- they have 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (may be at risk of a penalty notice).
- They have repeated unauthorised absences.
- The school feels a joint approach to improve attendance is necessary

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement; however, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices.

Parents/carers or older children may wish to contact the Educational Welfare Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. They can be contacted on 020 8359 2000 or by emailing [ewt@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:ewt@barnet.gov.uk)

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices are currently £80 rising to £160 if unpaid after 21 days, per parent/per child. If a second penalty notice is issued to a parent for the same pupil then it will be issued for a flat rate of £160.

If a penalty notice is unpaid after 28 days, then a local authority can choose to prosecute for each unpaid Penalty Notice per parent/per child. This is in accordance with the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

If unauthorised leave is repeated, or a parent has had two penalty notices issued, then the local authority can make the decision to take further action.

## **14. School Attendance Target**

The school has targets to improve attendance and you and your child have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

**The minimum level of attendance for our school is 96% attendance** in accordance with the government guidelines, and we will keep you updated regularly about progress in regard to this percentage in our newsletters and letters sent by the Attendance & Admissions Officer.

Our target is to achieve better than this as we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Barnet. Throughout the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

The school has a legal duty to publish both its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents/carers and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

All our staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible, which in turn optimises your child's attainment. Please support your child and us in order to achieve this.

This policy will be reviewed biennially.



## Absence procedure including persistent absentees

This is the process followed when pupils are absent from school

