

Date Valley School Trust



Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance, reducing absence and lateness, including persistent absence and lateness
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of children

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons, in shaa Allah.

2. Rationale

Poor attendance disadvantages children. We must ensure all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our children.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

3. Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days. (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12)

Schools should promote good school attendance and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that staff are alert to signs to look out for, and the individual triggers to be aware of, when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns.

4. Date Valley Expectations

At Date Valley:

Early Years children attend for 190 days = Total of 38 weeks

Primary children attend 180 days = Total of 36 weeks

We aspire to keep our attendance percentage at 96% and above. This means:

	Needs developing Below 95%	Satisfactory 95% - 96%	Good 97% - 99%	Outstanding 100%
Attendance	3 days absences per term	2 days absence per term	1 days absence per term	0 days absence per term
Punctuality	3 lates per term	2 lates per term	1 late per term	0 lates per term

For all children who are being funded for early education, there will be an expectation that attendance across a funding period is no less than 95%. Therefore, all guidance and sanctions stipulated in this policy apply equally to early years children accessing the free entitlement funding.

5. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

[The Education Act 1996](#)

[The Education Act 2002](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

6. School procedures

6.1 Admission Register

By law, all schools are required to keep an admission register, and all children must be placed on this register.

The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended. After off rolling, the admission register must also detail information of the forwarding school including the start date.

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and the attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the child will attend the school. If the child fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly.

All schools within the London Borough of Merton must notify Merton within 5 days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register.

All schools within the London Borough of Merton must notify Merton when a child comes off roll by or before the date on which they are taken off roll.

Schools should seek advice from Merton (020-8545-4021) in advance of removing a child for the following circumstances:

- Where the parent is proposing to home educate
- Where the child or family are missing and the school has been unable to contact by letter or telephone
- Where the family have moved house and the school does not know where the child will be educated
- Where the child is an open case to the Education Welfare Service
- Where the school is unable to get all the information required to complete the off-rolling report
- Where the child is on a legal plan with social care (Child protection / Child in need)
- In other circumstances where the school has concerns that aren't covered in the above

6.2 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all children 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 child 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.

6.3 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am on the day of absence. Parents should maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

Notification can be via telephone (020-8648-4647) or an email to schooloffice@dvst.org.uk

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason and ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If a child is absent and the school has not received notification, in the first instance, the attendance officer will call the parent. In the event of a non-response communication will be sent via email and ClassDojo. It is extremely important parents respond to communications regarding nonattendance in a timely manner. A second day of absence with no notification or communication forthcoming will result in the attendance officer making contact with the emergency contact.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence.

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.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 95%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

Examples of authorised absence may include, entrance exams, open mornings, induction days, days of religious observance, illness, and medical appointments. Parents are advised to make appointments for dentist/doctor or optician outside of school hours where possible.

Parents can support regular school attendance by:

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents' evenings and other events
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance

6.4 Punctuality

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the beginning of the school day.

The Headteacher will monitor the lateness of children as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. Children find it embarrassing to be late as arriving in the classroom alone draws unnecessary attention to themselves. It is of extreme importance therefore that all children arrive at school on time.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make written contact with parents/carers. Should the concern persist the parents will be called in for a meeting with the Headteacher.

Promoting punctuality is a whole school initiative, thus the class with the lowest lateness percentage for the week will be awarded the Punctuality Cup for the week.

The table below states the times children must arrive in school and the times classed as late and unauthorised. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

	On time	Late	Unauthorised
Al Kauthar	7.45am	7.55am	8.05am
Primary	8.45am	8.55am	9.05am
Early Years – am sessions	8.55am	9.05am	9.15am
Early Years – pm sessions	12.00pm	12.10pm	12.20pm

The table below states the times the registers are taken and kept open. A child arriving after the register closes will be marked as either late or unauthorised.

	Registration time
Al Kauthar - am	7.45am - 7.55am
Primary -am	8.45am - 8.55am
Al Kauthar and Primary pm	1.35pm - 1.45pm
Early Years – am sessions	8.55am - 9.05am
Early Years – pm sessions	12.00pm - 12.10pm

The table below states the afternoon times when the school gates open, close and the times classed as late pick up.

3 late pick-ups per term will incur a £10 penalty charge (per family).

	School gates open / close	Late for pick up
Al Kauthar	4.15pm to 4.25pm	4.25pm
Primary	3.20pm – 3.30pm	3.30pm
Primary (for half day closure days)	12.00pm – 12.10pm	12.10pm
Early Years – am sessions	12.00pm -12.10pm	12.10pm
Early Years – pm sessions	3.00pm – 3.10pm	3.10pm
3 late pick-ups per term will incur a £10 penalty charge (per family)		

6.5 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice via email to schooloffice@dvst.org.uk is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 7.

6.6 Reporting to parents

The school will report to parents on their child's punctuality and attendance records termly via the school report.

Half termly, the school will issue attendance certificates / letters to celebrate excellent / good attendance and highlight those of concern.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. We understand that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance.

Leave which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays
- Going shopping with parents
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Reluctant attenders

A parent /carer should complete a Term Time Absence Request Form (Appendix 3) (available upon request from the school office) and submit this to the school at least three weeks prior to the date required. The Headteacher will respond to the request within five school working days.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to children during term time unless they consider there to be exceptional circumstances, therefore all leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time or an immediate family bereavement. As the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave there is a requirement that parent / carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Headteacher.

If the Headteacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences, a reply confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent / carer. The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted

If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised, a reply informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent.

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.

If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the attendance register.

Date Valley will not consider requests for flexible schooling

7.2 Sanctions

Unauthorised absence (code: G,O,U) will incur the following sanctions:

- 3 days absence – warning letter
- 5 days absence - £60 penalty
- 7 days + absence – Headteacher meeting with the parent / carers to discuss and agree an Absence Parental Contract

Persistent absence due to Medical / Dental Appointment or Illness (code: M, I) will incur the following sanctions:

- 3 days absence – warning letter
- 4 days absence- doctor's note
- 6 days + absence - Headteacher meeting with the parent / carers to discuss and agree an Absence Parental Contract

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

Promoting punctuality good / excellent attendance is a whole school initiative.

The class with the lowest lateness percentage for the week is awarded the Punctuality Cup for the week.

The class with the best weekly attendance is awarded the Attendance Cup for the week.

Termly, the school issues attendance certificates / letters to celebrate excellent / good attendance and highlights those of concern.

Displayed in our reception area is our Attendance Tree. Every class is represented by a branch on the tree. Class attendance is monitored weekly and the attendance percentages are shared with the classes during assembly time.

100% attendance = 3 golden dates for the class branch

98% - 99% attendance = 2 golden dates for the class branch

97% attendance = 1 golden date for the class branch

At the end of each term the class with the highest number of golden dates for the term, is rewarded with some special class time of their choice. This might be an afternoon of sports or art activities or a local visit.

9. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. The persistent absence threshold is 5%. If a child's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 5%, the child will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Those children whose attendance and or punctuality falls below 95% will be closely monitored and further action considered. The school will challenge the attitude of those children and parents who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.

All attendance registers will be checked and absences monitored on a daily basis. The attendance officer will flag individual children of concern and the Headteacher will analyse individual pupil data to identify patterns of absence which cause concern. Parents will be informed as detailed in sections 6.4, 6.6 and 7.2.

If after contacting parents and agreeing an Absence Parental Contract, the child's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the local education welfare officer.

Child-level absence data is collected each term, which allows for analysis of data. This helps to identify the main causes of absence within the school and plan appropriate action to ensure all children attend school regularly. The data is shared with school trustees.

Attendance data is analysed to identify particular groups of children whose absences cause concern and may be in need of intervention and support. The analysed groups include year group, ethnicity or gender.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

10.2 The headteacher

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 the trustees.

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

10.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual child level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers from the local authorities to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

10.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis via completion of the attendance register during the morning and afternoon registration sessions.

10.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Trust Board.

12. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding related policies

This policy has been read and approved for Date Valley School Trust, by the Headteacher and the Date Valley Trust Board.

Date: February 2019

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

Appendix 2: Useful Information for Parents and Carers

Introduction

For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school in good time for the start of the school day, every day the school is open, unless they are genuinely ill or there is some other unavoidable reason.

Some children are reluctant to go to school and say they do not feel well. It is for you as the adult, to judge whether they are genuinely unwell, or just unwilling. It will be better for them in the long run to go to school, rather than avoid it, as days off mean they will fall further behind and this will make them even more reluctant. Your job as the parent is to encourage them to attend.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is YOUR legal responsibility and permitting absence without good reason is an offence in law and may result in a penalty notice or legal action being taken.

Any absence affects the child's learning, and the more they miss the harder it will be for them to catch up. Research has shown that for every percentage point of absence, attainment is significantly lower.

There is extensive research linking poor school attendance with crime and anti-social behaviour and risk of exploitation by unsuitable adults. For this reason, failure to attend regularly will be regarded as a safeguarding issue.

You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is 95%. This may make it easier to understand:

- 95% equates to half a day off every two weeks
- 90% equates to a day off every two weeks
- 85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks
- 80% equates to one whole day off every week

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, GP note, etc.

Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will be UNAUTHORISED under any circumstances are:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family

- Family birthdays
- Going shopping with parents
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Reluctant attenders

You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to sort the problem out. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

A child is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 5% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it.

You may be asked to agree on an Absence Parental Contract to support your child's attendance. These are initiated where the school feels you may need help in influencing your child to attend properly. A meeting will be held by the Headteacher to which you and your child will be invited. The problems will be discussed and an agreement reached as to what the school will do, the child will do and what you as parents/carers will do to try to improve the situation.

If your child is absent you must contact the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence, contacting the school either by telephone or by email. Please keep in touch with the school throughout the duration of the absence.

The school's policy is not to authorise holidays during term time. Any applications for leave in term time must be made to the headteacher via Term Time Absence Request Form (Appendix 3). There is no automatic right to term time leave of absence and your request is likely to be declined except in the most exceptional circumstances.

Each application will be considered on its own merit and the attendance record(s) of the child/ren concerned will be taken into account when making a decision.

Sanctions for unauthorised or persistence absence are implemented as follows:

Unauthorised absence (code: G,O,U) will incur the following sanctions:

- 3 days absence – warning letter
- 5 days absence - £60 penalty
- 7 days + absence – Headteacher meeting with the parent / carers to discuss and agree an Absence Parental Contract

Persistent absence due to Medical / Dental Appointment or Illness (code: M, I) will incur the following sanctions:

- 3 days absence – warning letter
- 4 days absence- doctor's note
- 6 days + absence - Headteacher meeting with the parent / carers to discuss and agree an Absence Parental Contract

Please make sure that the contact details you have given to the school are kept up to date, so that in the event of an accident, emergency or any other need to contact you we have the correct details.

Appendix 3: Term Time Absence Request Form

Date Valley School Trust

Company number: 06845508 Registered Charity number: 1136298

Mitcham Court, Cricket Green, Mitcham CR4 4LB

Telephone: 0208 648 4647 · Tel: 07980299717 Email: managingdirector@dvst.org.uk



Term Time Absence Request Form

In line with government recommendations we request that you do not take holidays during term time as this can be disruptive for your child's progress.

ONLY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WILL BE AUTHORISED

Please note unauthorised leave of absence will result in a penalty fine (£60 per child) and possible involvement of an Education Welfare Officer and / or legal action being issued.

A parent /carer should complete a Term Time Absence Request Form and submit this to the school at least three weeks prior to the date required. The Headteacher will respond to the request within five school working days.

CHILD'S NAME: _____ CLASS: _____

Please indicate below the dates you wish to take:

From (first date of absence) _____ to _____ (last date of absence)

Please explain reason for request for absence:

Evidence provided to support your request:

Signed: _____ DATE: _____

Term Time Absence Request Form

Reply Slip

Child's name:

Absence so far this year: _____ **days**

Absence authorised: Yes / No

Authorised in full: Yes / No

Authorised in part: Yes / No

Dates if in part:

Comment:

Date completed:

Signature: