Attendance Policy

Based on the T&W document –
Attendance Policy Support and Guidance 2020

Agreed by Governors: Autumn 2020
To be reviewed: Autumn 2022

This whole-school attendance policy is based on the 5 'Ps' - namely, Philosophy, Principles, Procedures, Performance & Practice.

Philosophy

Dothill Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Principles

The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law,

- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,

- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,

- display attendance rates around the school and celebrate good and improved attendance of all pupils,

- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence,

- consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the whole-school attendance policy,

- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors,

- send regular newsletters to parents and pupils informing them of attendance related issues, additionally update school website with any attendance related issues,

- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed,

- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

- take responsibility for Children not Receiving Education (CNRE), so that school are in regular contact with the pupil and parent, ensuring the pupils safety, working together so that the pupil can resume full time education,

- monitor and regularly review those pupils subject to a modified timetable, ensuring it is a short term intervention and have a clear plan for reintegration back into full time attendance at school.

Procedures

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:

- follow 'First day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone/text message, or if the parent is unavailable send a standard letter requesting information,

- consider sending a second letter if an explanation has still not been received after three days of unexplained absence or send a School Attendance Letter (SAL),

- refer to the school's nominated attendance person (NAP), to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence and consider a referral to the *Children & Family Locality Services*' or contact *'Family Connect'* if no contact can be made with the parent.

- where there are safeguarding or similar concerns regarding the pupil/family additional services should be contacted immediately if the school is unable to make contact with the family. (e.g social care, strengthening families)

- invite the parents into school for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence, unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil and the NAP. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance,

- support the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then a 'Reintegration Plan' can be implemented. The plan should include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupils needs as possible

- provide Early Help advice and support to the family, undertaking an Early Help Assessment if appropriate and make a referral to Strengthening Families if it is felt the family would benefit from additional support.

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

<u>Leave of absence</u>

Within school there are clear procedures with regards to requests for leave in term time. These follow the guidance of the LA and new DFE regulations. We will only consider leave in term time where both:

- the application is made to the headteacher in advance of the leave by a parent/carer the child normally lives with,

- there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the headteacher for the leave.

Applications should be made as far in advance of the leave as possible and parents/carers should speak to the school before they book any leave of absences. We will only agree absence in **exceptional circumstances**.

Leave of absences in term time are actively discouraged by the school and the LA, and we will follow the advice set out by the DFE as:

- each request can only be judged on a case by case basis;
- even in exceptional circumstances it is expected that Headteachers will use their discretion sparingly;
- Headteachers should not apply policies (for example, blanket bans) which might suggest that each application has not been considered on its individual merits;
- as a general guide any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time should not be authorised during the school term.

All parents requesting leave of absence must complete the Request form with as much notice as possible, and preferably before booking any trip abroad.

A written response will then be sent by the Headteacher. If the absence is authorised, the letter will detail how many days are authorised. If the absence is unauthorised, parents could be issued with a penalty notice. In Telford & Wrekin, Holiday Penalty Notices (HPN) are issued by the Attendance Support Team to parents who take their children out of school during term time without getting authorisation from the school. The penalty is £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days. If parent/carers fail to pay the penalty fine within 28 days they will be prosecuted.

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

<u>Performance</u>

It is important to set realistic targets for both attendance and persistent absence; these targets will be set during the Autumn term of each academic year, in consultation with the governing body. The governing body must approve the school target for attendance to be set for the following academic year. The target should be sent to the Attendance Support Team by the end of the Autumn term at the latest. In compiling an Action Plan, the school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Persistent absence has reduced
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absences has improved
- Re-integration plans have been successful
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

<u>Equal Opportunities (see Equal Opportunities Policy)</u>

Equal opportunities is about ensuring that every member of the school community is regarded as being of equal worth and importance, irrespective of culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, learning abilities, sensory or physical impairment, social class or lifestyle; it is about recognising differences, meeting individual needs and taking positive action, so that everyone has equal access to the educational opportunities offered by the school; it is also about regularly monitoring that each child has the opportunity to achieve.

<u>Practice</u>

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Liaising closely with the school's NAP, if appropriate
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages
- A signed copy of any correspondence is retained by the school
- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention using the electronic ASTR form

The appendix contains models of good practice recommended by the Local Authority.

Signed……………………………………………………………………Date……………………………………………………………

(Head teacher)

Signed……………………………………………………………………Date……………………………………………………………

(Chair of Governors)

Appendix: Good Practice

The LA recommends that schools observe the following good practice:

3.1 <u>**Keeping the Registers**</u>

The status of the register

The register is a legal document which can be maintained in paper or electronic format. Registers, attendance & absence codes must be recorded accurately and any paper copies must be marked in ink. The register, or content recorded within it, may be requested in a Court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It may also contribute data to pupils' end-of-term reports, to records of achievement, and to leavers' references.

An accurate, timely and consistent registration system is crucial if poor attendance and punctuality within a school are to be addressed. It is vital that pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day.

Registration **may** be perceived as a task to be completed as quickly as possible. All staff involved with the registration process should be aware that the law is very specific regarding the keeping of registers. Marking and keeping the register is of the utmost importance. The form tutor/teacher should not relegate it to the bottom of the list of priorities.

Every entry on the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date in which the entry was made, N.B every amendment to the admissions register and attendance register must include: the original entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

3.2 <u>**Marking the Register**</u>

<u>(See also DfE guidance 'School Attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – August 2020 (plus the addendum to this guidance) ' and DfE guidance 'School attendance parental responsibility measures'</u>

    a) **No pupil should be marked present unless actually present in the room when the register is taken** or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher.

    b) Spaces must not be left in the register.

    c) Registers should be closed at an agreed time each day. AST have circulated LA guidance in line with DfE guidelines. These suggest that registers are closed 30 minutes after the start of the morning session.

    d) Where a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupil should be marked as late 'L' – code, but counted as present for that session.

    e) Where a pupil misses registration (arrives after registration has closed) absence must be marked as an unauthorised absence – 'U' code.

    f) Where a pupil misses registration but provides an adequate explanation, s/he should be recorded as late if arriving before the register closes, but coded as an authorised absence for the session e.g. M for dental or medical appointment if arriving after the register closes.

    g) Pupils must not mark the register under any circumstances.

h) Attendance data from registers should be monitored appropriately.

i) The decision to authorise an absence should be made within a maximum of ten school days from the date of the absence. If no reason has been provided during this time the absence should be recorded as unauthorised.

3.3 Computerised Registration:

Schools use a variety of management Information systems (MIS) to record attendance. Using an MIS system will not by itself improve attendance. It does, however, provide an accessible, accurate and easy to use record of data and information relating to the individual pupil or whole school attendance in the form of data reports, these may include:

- a daily report of all absentees

- a register over any given time which codes all absences allowing the reader to quickly identify patterns and trends in authorised and unauthorised absences,

- an individual registration certificate per pupil which can be produced at any time in the school year and includes information on total percentage attendance, absence and punctuality,

- an absence-mapping facility which can be used to check a pupil's attendance against another pupil, or a group of pupils' attendance if there is a suspicion of multiple truancy,

- a record of attendance for each class over any given period of time which will provide a percentage attendance figure for each session and data which could identify patterns of absence for individuals as well as the whole class.

- Individual reports for vulnerable pupils and vulnerable groups of pupils.

- A list of all pupils who are persistent absentees (90% or below)

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason,

- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken,

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,

- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

3.4 Removal from Roll

(See also DfE guidance 'School Attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (August 2020) and 'Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for local authorities (September 2016) and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Schools must inform the LA within 5 days of any intended deletion from roll using the A/D 1 form. Pupils should only be removed from the school roll and class registers under the following circumstances:

a) Where a parent informs the school that they are moving out of the area and give a new address and school where they intend to register the child. Following the date given for the re-location the school will contact the new school/LA to ascertain that the child is, in fact, living in the area and has been registered at a school. If confirmed, the Headteacher can remove the pupil from school roll and registers, retrospectively from the date given for the move. If the pupil cannot be located in the area the parents has given the school should complete a CME/CNRE referral form and submit the form to the childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk inbox.

b) Where a parent informs the school that they will be pursuing a place in another school in the local area the parent should complete the online in-year transfer request section of their 'My Telford' account and the Admissions Team at Telford & Wrekin Council will process the application and inform both schools of the transfer. The Admissions Team will inform the parent that a place is available to them at the new school. Once admission is confirmed at the new school the original school can remove the child from roll and submit an A/D1 form (within 5 days).

c) Where a parent informs the school that they wish their child's name be removed from the school roll as they intend to teach the child *otherwise than at school*, the school must inform the LA by completing the 'Pupil Passport' and submitting it to the accessandinclusion@telford.gov.uk inbox. Once the child's name is removed from the school roll the LA Advisory Teacher for Elective Home Education will write to the parent and monitor the educational provision from that point.

d) Where a pupil has been continuously absent for not less than 4 weeks and the school has made reasonable enquiries which have failed to locate the pupil. In such cases a school representative or, once a referral from the school has been received, an attendance & pupil tracking officer will make home visits and other enquiries to ascertain that the family are no longer living at their last known address. Removal of a pupil from the school roll should only be undertaken when authorised by the Headteacher after these enquiries have taken place. **The school must notify the LA in all cases of a pupil being removed from the school roll where a family has moved and cannot be traced in line with DfE guidance 'Children Missing Education' –** September 2016'**. This information should be submitted via an A/D1 form. The school should also complete a CME/CNRE referral form and forward it to childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk the Attendance & Pupil Tracking Officer will then ensure the pupil is tracked.** Schools may be contacted and asked to keep the pupil on roll whilst further investigations are made. Schools can liaise directly with the Attendance & Pupil tracking officer.

e) Where a pupil is registered in accordance with a school attendance order and the LA substitutes another school.

f) Where a pupil has been granted leave of absence e.g. for the purpose of a holiday but has failed to attend school within the twenty school days immediately following the expiry of the leave (except by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause). Reasonable enquires must be undertaken by the school in these circumstances to trace the pupil, prior to removal from the school roll. If the pupils' whereabouts is known the school cannot remove the child from the school roll. **The school must liaise with the LA in all cases of a pupil being removed from the school roll in circumstances relating to non-return from leave of absence e.g. for a holiday.**

g) Where a pupil is certified by the School Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a state of health to attend before ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

h) Where the pupil has died.

i) Where the pupil has been permanently excluded. The Pupil Discipline Committee must have met. 15 school days will then be allowed for a possible independent review panel before the pupil is removed from the school roll.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently do not provide for a school to delete a pupil from the admission register where the pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age and has failed to meet the academic requirements for entry to their sixth-form.

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations will allow this, bringing the regulations into line with the School Admissions Code 2014, which allows schools to set academic requirements for entry into sixth-form.

It is illegal for a school to remove a pupil from a school roll simply because the pupil has a poor behaviour or poor attendance record.

3.5   Expected First Day of Attendance

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.
If a pupil 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 must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register by using the A/D 1 form and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year – for example pupils who are registered at a secondary school at the start of Year 7 - unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided.

3.6   Professional Development Days

Where schools are proposing to take PD days, it is good practice for a Headteacher to agree these days with the support of the full governing body and to liaise with neighbouring schools. Parents should be given sufficient notice of training days and dates should be published on the school website, enabling parents to make appropriate child care arrangements. The LA should be informed of all PD days as soon as they are set.

Attendance Procedures:

1. Admin team close the registers at 9:25 and make a record of all absences. They will endeavour to find out the reason for the absence:
   a. Parents must tell the office (phone call) if their child is absent, giving a reason for the absence, by 9:00a.m.
      N.B. This information will not be accepted from siblings or other children.
   b. Absences for pre-booked medical appointments are recorded in the office diary
   c. Absences for pre-booked holidays are recorded in the Absence Requests folder.
   d. The reason for absence will be recorded on the printed morning register.
   e. If no reason is given then the admin team will check with the teacher that the child is not in school and then phone parents/carers to request a reason.
   f. If there is no response by phone then the admin team will mark the absence as unauthorised and send a letter to the parent informing them and asking for the reason for the absence.
   g. If an acceptable reason is given at a later date, the attendance code will be changed by the admin team.

2. All medical appointments should be made outside of school hours if at all possible. If an appointment during the school day is unavoidable then parents/carers are expected to bring the child into school before the appointment before or afterwards. Written evidence in the form of an appointment card, hospital letter, etc. (or sight of a text reminder) is requested from the parent/carer in advance, if possible, or on the day if not. It is preferred that this is by email.

3. Teachers/staff should record all absences as N initially. If anyone passes information to a member of staff regarding a reason for absence then they should direct the person to the office. NB Staff should not accept a reason and offer to pass the information to the office. It must be told directly to the office.

4. If a child is ill during the day then the head teacher makes the decision to send them home. If the head teacher is not available then the next senior leader will make the decision. NB If the head teacher is in the building then it should be the head teacher!

Appendix 2

Attendance Action Plan

Desired outcomes	Action to achieve	Person responsible	Monitored by	frequency
To improve attendance	• The senior leadership team will give high priority to supporting the improvement of attendance and reduction of persistent absence e.g. by regularly reviewing data and reports provided by the School Attendance Lead (SAL)	Senior Leadership Team	SLT / Governing Body / SIP	Half termly
	• Students are continually reminded about the importance of good attendance by all staff.	All Staff		
	• The tutor/class teacher has a statutory obligation to mark the register regularly and accurately each time the register is opened and submit data to the attendance clerk as agreed in the school attendance policy	Tutor		Twice daily
	• NAP to monitor the register to ensure appropriate use of codes			
	• The attendance clerk will check the registers / data base for absentees daily.			
	• First day calling procedures will be followed e.g. attendance clerk (or other nominated person) to phone parents / carers to enquire why student is not in school if no prior notification has been received			Daily
	• Attendance co-ordinator to log all contacts with parents relating to absence and liaise with HT any concerns.	Attendance clerk		
	• The NAP (or other nominated person) will meet regularly (3 weekly) with the HT to discuss attendance / PA data and identify cases requiring support and plan appropriate action, focus to be on under 93%	Attendance clerk		3 weekly
	• The school will, wherever appropriate, provide additional support for a student returning to school after absence.			
	• The Governors will set aspirational annual attendance target based on prior performance	Attendance clerk		Annually
	• The school review / update an action plan to support the achievement of the agreed targets	School		
	• Attendance information to be added to the School news letter			
	• Attendance Clerk and SAL to monitor medical absences and request evidence where necessary, discuss with and involve school nurse where appropriate	Governors		half term

		School Attendance clerk		
To reduce persistent absence	As above plus • Names of students with PA will be identified and actions agreed for each individual student • The school to contact parents of a child with PA on the first day of absence • The HT will try to contact / visit the family to find out the reason for absence and offer support to get the student back into school at the earliest opportunity • HT will hold annual attendance panels to include PA pupils and families	Attendance clerk and HT	SLT / Governing Body / SIP	3 weekly Daily As soon as possible after notification Termly
To reduce Lateness	• Lates protocol to be managed by school. • Attendance co-ordinator to Unauthorise any lateness if student attends after close of register • Court action to be considered for lates after the close of registers if no improvement shown	Attendance clerk	SLT / Governing Body / SIP	Reviewed 3 weekly Weekly 3 weekly Daily
To reduce days lost to term time leave of absences	• All staff are aware of T&W policy on term time leave of absences and of strategies to reduce their duration and occurrence • The school will monitor days lost due to term time leave of absences • NAP to inform AST of any leave of absences not Authorised in term time and provide letters sent to parents • Increase the use of Penalty Notices for Unauthorised leave of absences in term time (10 unauthorised sessions)	Attendance clerk and HT	SLT / Governing Body / SIP	Annually Termly As required As required
To reduce days lost to fixed term exclusions	• The school will monitor the number and duration of fixed term exclusions for all students.	HT	SLT / Governing Body / SIP	Termly
To reduce days lost due to part time protocol	• The school will monitor the students placed on part time protocols; they will record the number of hours when each child is expected to attend school and any arrangements for alternative education. They will review these arrangements every 6 weeks. The school will complete the Part time protocol paper work and forward this to AST on a regular basis.	HT	AST	Every 6 weeks
To reduce absence	• The school will discuss with AST the need to hold attendance panels for	HT and	SLT /	When necessary

by attendance panels	individual students who do not respond to other strategies used to improve attendance.	attendance clerk	Governing Body / SIP	
To reduce absence by using prosecutions	• HT will identify students who need to be considered for legal proceedings for non-school attendance. • Attendance clerk to prepare file for court for pupils with unauthorised absence under 90% where appropriate. • AST to provide support for the prosecution process	HT and attendance clerk AST	AST	When necessary
Recognise and Reward improvement and good attendance	• Class attendance to be displayed • Attendance discussed regularly in assembly • 100% attendance to be recognised and celebrated • WISE UP programme to be used to support individual attendance monitoring	HT, attendance clerk, class teachers	SLT / Governing Body / SIP	weekly