



Attendance Policy 2024- 25

Date Issued:	September 2024
Prepared by:	Head Teacher
Review date:	September 2025
Date Adopted by Governing Body:	

Durham Lane Primary School

Statement of Intent

At Durham Lane Primary School we believe that regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is vital to a good education. Securing it must therefore be a high priority of the school, governors, L.A., parents and the pupils themselves. Attendance is everyone's responsibility. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils lessen the impact of the education provided for them. Pupil absence may seriously disrupt the continuity of teaching for themselves and others.

The aim of Durham Lane Primary school is to facilitate our pupils' regular and sustained attendance at school by providing a full and efficient educational experience for all their students.

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. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

School Attendance the Statutory Framework

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

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

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Helen Gregory and can be contacted via the school office on 01642 780742.

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data as outlined later in the policy
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Helen Gregory and can be contacted via the school office on 01642 780742.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the start of each session.

School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupils' Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. This is shown on our computer records.

Both staff and pupils should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was indeed intended in law. Particular attention should be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers. Stockton-On-Tees Local Authority requires our teachers to complete registers and the symbols shown in the table within the policy are entered on the computerised records.

Registers are taken by the class teacher. The class teacher has a password to access the register. The register is taken and saved so that the office receives a copy of the register.

If the child informs the teacher that they may be late to school due to an appointment the teacher can place this on the computerised site as a note. Messages received by the administration staff can also be added to electronic registers for individual children.

In accordance with current legislation, each class in school has an electronic attendance register. It is school policy that registers are completed at 9am and 1pm, when the am and pm sessions begin and the information will then be returned to the school office.

It is our policy at Durham Lane Primary to record a late mark, for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place, code (L) for lateness and code (U) for unauthorised lateness. Registration closes at 9.10am and 1.05pm. Pupils arriving after 8:50am when the gate closes, will be recorded as late in the register. Pupils who arrive after 9.10am when registration has closed will be marked with a U for unauthorised lateness in the register.

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupts their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality.

It is the school's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

The school administrative system will be marked with a late mark and the administration assistant will monitor the late marks weekly.

All children arriving late should be signed in at the school office.

Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will need to be registered for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the school office. The pupils mark in the register will be amended as appropriate. All Key Stage 1 children will require an adult to sign them in at the school office. All Key Stage 2 children arriving late should sign themselves in at the school office.

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instances, enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or other genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason need to keep the Head teacher informed. Further action may be taken if there is no valid reason for this lateness.

Registration Procedure

Registers will be completed as quickly as possible at the start of each session. Registers will be sent electronically to the school office following this registration period. The files will be sent to the office at the close of registration.

Class	Start Time (Doors open at 8:45)	Finish Time
Reception	8:45am	3.15pm
Year 1	8.45am	3.15pm
Year 2	8.45am	3.15pm
Year 3	8.45am	3.20pm
Year 4	8:50am	3.20pm
Year 5	8.50am	3.20pm
Year 6	8:50am	3.20pm

Pupils present will be so marked by a horizontal line on the register.

Pupils not present before the close of registration 9.10am will be marked by an N in the register.

Late

Pupils arriving at school after registration starts at 9am must report to the school office where they must sign in using the electronic system, an adjustment will be made to the class register by applying an L in the present column on the register. This will be interpreted in the class register as a child present at school having arrived late after registration. This constitutes attendance for Health and Safety purposes.

If a pupil fails to attend registration for either the morning or afternoon session, an explanation note, a telephone call, a text or an e mail may authorise this absence, e.g. visit to doctor/dentist. School will request medical evidence before authorising any health-related absences. Otherwise it will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised lateness after registration code (U), constitutes unauthorised absence and impacts upon attendance.

Absence

Once we receive a reason for an absence, we may authorise that absence by inserting the correct code on the computer records. Reporting by telephone, verbally to a member of staff or a note are all acceptable.

Staff will operate first day response whereby parents will be contacted on the first day of any unexplained absence, by school comms, phone, e mail or text.

If, after three weeks no satisfactory reason has been given and the child has returned to school the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

A list of symbols used for demarcating AUTHORISED and UNAUTHORISED absences on the computer records is included in Table 1.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call, text, email or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to agree to it. If the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally-condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, school will involve the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team with a view to Local Authority Attendance Procedures, following school level interventions.

An excessive amount of authorised absence can also seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. We must be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence. We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered. Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary, on occasion, to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences.

The Head teacher will only authorise leave of absence, due to exceptional circumstances.

Key Points

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required, by law, to be in school.
- Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance.
- Lateness should be actively discouraged.
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation, an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason), the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly.

- Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered.
- Explanations such as minding the house, looking after other children, or shopping trips within school hours will not be accepted as reasons for absence.
- Where possible appointments to be made outside of school hours

Leave of absence

Parents do not have an automatic right to request a leave of absence for their children. A leave of absence will only be authorised by the Head teacher due to exceptional circumstances. Parents are urged strongly to avoid taking family holidays during term time.

To request a leave of absence the parent/carer must submit an Absence Request form to the Head Teacher with supporting evidence for the request as soon as is practical.

Reporting Absence

At Durham Lane Primary parents are required to report absences by telephone call, text or email on the first day of absence, by 9.30am, as well as each subsequent day of absence, and advise when the child is expected to return.

Attendance Procedures

Intervention at School Level

Stage 1 - Monitor

This section describes the role of school in relation to improving attendance.

- 1.1 The Class Teacher is responsible for maintaining an accurate register and informing the School Attendance Officer and/or Head teacher of any concerns about attendance and punctuality. The School Attendance Officer monitors attendance of pupils across the school.
- 1.2 The school will carry out 'first day response'. Parents that have not contacted school by 9.30am with a reason for their child's absence will be telephoned, text or e-mailed on the first morning of absence by 10am. If no response is received, this will be followed up by office staff across the day and referred to a senior member of staff.
- 1.3 If a pupil is absent for up to three days and there has been no contact from parents, a home visit will be made. The administration staff will continue to carry out enquiries, to ascertain the pupil's absence. After 10 days of unauthorised absence, where a parent is not engaged a decision will be made to refer to the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team with a view to Local Authority 'Children Missing Education' procedures.
- 1.4 If a pupil is deemed to be vulnerable and no reason has been provided for the absence and staff are unable to contact parent(s) by telephone, e-mail or school comms, or a home visit. School will initiate safeguarding procedures and take advice from social care.

Stage 2 - Attendance Concerns

- 2.1 Any child under 96% will receive an attendance letter stating the concerns regarding attendance.
- 2.2 Home should be contacted, preferably by phone, text e mail or by letter if this is the only option remaining.

- 2.3 A record should be kept of all contact and conversations Parents/carers should be encouraged to visit school to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement.
- 2.4 The Head teacher should discuss the pupil with the Class Teacher and, where possible, see the parent. It is important to establish the reasons for poor attendance, the general health of the pupil, home circumstances etc. The parent should be given a target for the pupil's attendance, which is higher than their normal attendance rate.
- 2.5 A date for review of attendance should be set, no more than 4 weeks later.
- 2.6 If attendance has improved, then a letter of commendation should be sent home and pupil returns to STAGE 1.
- 2.7 If attendance has not improved, then options may include:
- (i) Contact home to discuss the review and set a further review date.
 - (ii) Discuss with the parent areas of concerns and where other support might be appropriate, via an attendance meeting (EHA) and discussion with the Local Authority School Support Advisor.
 - (iii) Implementing an Attendance Support Plan in consultation with parent(s), where possible, via a meeting in school. The attendance support plan will outline the views of parent(s), school and where appropriate the pupil and detail the expectations around attendance and the support identified to improve attendance, depending on the issues identified.
 - (iii) A referral to the Local Authority to issues penalty notice fines/initiate legal proceedings.

A Reminder: Only school may authorise a pupil's absence. All absences must be explained by the pupil's parents/carers. Irregular attendance due to unauthorised absence may result in a referral to the attendance team to initiate legal proceedings.

Legal Sanctions and penalty notices

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion

(where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Reward Systems

Every week during 'Celebration Assembly' the class with the best attendance receives a trophy.

Absence Code Quick Guide

Code	Quick Reference Definition	Statistical Purposes
/	In attendance for the morning session (physically on school site)	Present
\	In attendance for the afternoon session (physically on school site)	Present
L	Arrived after the register but before close of registration (30 mins)	Present
K	In attendance at an alternative provision under an arrangement made by the LA	Present
B	In attendance at an alternative provision arranged by the school	Present
V	Attendance at a trip or educational visit that takes place during the school session, arranged by or on behalf of school and supervised by a member of school staff	Present
P	In attendance at an educational activity that is a sporting one, and physically supervised by a member of staff, or a person approved by the school as suitably skilled, experienced and trained to ensure the safety of the pupil, and the educational content is met. *	Present
W	In attendance at an approved educational activity that is work experience. and physically supervised by a member of staff, or a person approved by the school as suitably skilled, experienced and trained to ensure the safety of the pupil, and the educational content is met. *	Present

C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance including for the purpose of an agreed family holiday	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of performance/entertainment supported with appropriate licensing documentation issued by the LA.	Authorised Absence
C2	Pupil absence due to a part time timetable (compulsory school age)	Authorised Absence
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Authorised Absence
I	Absent due to illness	Authorised Absence

Absence Code Quick Guide

J1	Attending an interview for employment or an interview for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
M	Absent to attend a medical or dental appointment	Authorised Absence
R	Absence on a day exclusively set aside by the religious body as a day of religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised Absence
T	A mobile child travelling with parents who do so as part of their trade or business	Authorised Absence

G	Holiday leave not granted due to not meeting exceptional circumstance criteria	Unauthorised Absence
N	No reason for absence provided by the parent (maximum time for this code in register is 5 days)	Unauthorised Absence
O	No reason for absence provided	Unauthorised Absence
U	Pupil arrived for the session after the close of registration (max for close of registers 30 minutes)	Unauthorised Absence

D	Dual registered at another school and expected to attend the session at the other school	Not a possible attendance
Q	Not in attendance as the LA is legally obliged to arrange travel and has not done so	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Transport in place by LA or school but not available and the school is not within walking distance	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption caused by a local, national or international emergency	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Partial school closure due to part of the school being out of use and impractical to house all pupils in parts of the school that are open	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unexpected whole school closure (adverse weather event, no heating, no water etc fits in here)	Not a possible attendance

Absence Code Quick Guide

Y5	Pupil detained in custody	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Pupil unable to attend due to public health guidance or law	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause that effects the pupil not the parent (reason must be recorded)	Not a possible attendance
Z	Prospective Pupil not yet on admission register	Administrative code only
#	Planned whole school closure, weekends, half terms etc	Administrative code only

*The safeguarding of the pupil remains the school responsibility.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section, above)

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy