

# Deer Park Primary School

## Attendance Policy 2024-2025



### **Statement of intent:**

We, at Deer Park Primary School, strive for excellence and enjoyment in education by providing a safe, secure, caring family environment, where all are valued and respected as individuals. We will endeavour to enable the children to reach their full potential, by making the most of the opportunities that our school has to offer. We expect all children on roll to attend every day when school is in session, so long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Deer Park Primary School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

### **Introduction**

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

### **Definitions**

#### **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

*Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if an absence is supported by a parent, an absence will be unauthorised.*

#### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

### **Procedures**

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Weekly class attendance awards
- Overall best class attendance awards
- Communication through newsletters and parents' app
- Letters sent where attendance falls short of expected

- School attendance monitoring processes to support families to achieve good attendance and remove barriers.

**Parents' responsibilities:**

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents should ensure that, if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as illness, they should contact the school as soon as possible, preferably on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by letter or in person. Verbal messages on the parent's behalf from an adult relative or representative such as a childminder or friend may be accepted at the school's discretion on the first day of absence – subsequent absences must be explained by the parent. Verbal messages from children, e.g. siblings, will not be accepted.
- Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason, the school will record such absences as unauthorised. In some cases, this may be retrospective and authorisation may be withdrawn should circumstances arise leading the school to decide that the reason given was not truthful. If this occurs, this will be discussed with the parent.
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives on time for the start of registration at 8.50am. Children arriving between 9.00am and 9.05am will be viewed as late and marked as L in the register. Children arriving after 9.05am should report to the office and the parent should sign their child in using the electronic signing in system. In the case of older unaccompanied children, the child should follow this procedure. Arrivals after 9.05am will be marked as U in the register. The Evacuation Report will be created at this time and any child not in school by 9.15am will be contacted by phone by the school office using the first phone number on the contact list. Further phone numbers will then be rung if a response is not given to the first contact number.
- Parents should avoid booking family holidays during term-time. Such holidays will not be authorised.

**School responsibilities:**

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress and personal wellbeing.
- Registers will be taken twice daily. Registers will close at 9.05am for both Key Stages and 1.10pm for Key Stage 1 children and 1.20pm for key Stage 2 children. Any child arriving after the close of the registration period will be recorded as "late" for that session.
- Teachers will complete registers in accordance with guidance given by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will inspect registers weekly in order to ensure that

they are being satisfactorily maintained and to identify any potential attendance problems at an early stage.

- Should a class teacher have any concerns about a child's attendance and punctuality, the Headteacher must be informed. This can be done in person or via a note on their RM Integris Register.
- Should a child be absent, the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. Should no explanation have been received, the class teacher will inform staff in the office or the Headteacher, who will endeavour to make contact with the parent.
- All absence notes from parents should be recorded by the class teacher and a note made on their Integris Register where they will be stored. Only notes regarding absences where there are concerns need be brought to the attention of the Headteacher, who may then choose to speak to the parents.
- The Headteacher will regularly collect attendance data and report this to the Governing Body. Attendance thresholds and targets for individual children will be identified from the data and follow up tasks and actions for both the school and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will also be identified if the circumstances deem it necessary. Other agencies, such as Social Care, may also be involved.
- Deer Park Primary School will employ a number of strategies to promote regular attendance, including: publishing clear attendance information in the Governors Review.

### **Illness**

Please notify the school on the first day of absence due to illness. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for confirmation from a medical professional if a child's absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Unacceptable reasons for absence will be classed as unauthorised.

### **Lateness**

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 9am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9:10am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.10am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

### **School Outings / Visits / Residential Trips**

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, will not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity.

Opportunities for children to attend these are provided; if they don't go, the children are **expected in school**, where alternative arrangements will be made for them.

Governors **will not authorise** absence if the child does not attend school during this time, unless there is a valid medical reason (a bad cold is not acceptable) or medical certification is provided or there are exceptional family circumstances.

### **Absence for Religious Reasons**

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

### **Inclement Weather or other reasons the school building may be closed**

In case of inclement weather (or other reason the school building may have to close) the school will endeavour to stay open for as long as it is safe to do so. Any decisions to close the school building will be communicated to parents at the earliest opportunity and the school will inform parents via Class Dojo and the school website, in addition to publicising through the Derbyshire County Council website and on local radio. If you are in any doubt as to whether the school will be open or closed then please check the latest information on the Derbyshire County Council website or alternatively ring the school office.

There will be five days during the school year when the school will be closed for staff-in-service training. These dates will be relayed to you at the earliest opportunity after the dates have been finalised.

Any decision to close the school building by the Head Teacher or other authorised person will not have a detrimental effect on any child's attendance record.

### **Persistent absentees:**

Persistent absentees are defined as children whose attendance is below 95% and where unsatisfactory reasons are given for absence. However, the procedures outlined below may apply to children whose attendance is above 95% but where there are concerns about deteriorating attendance or where patterns are emerging, e.g. regular absences on particular days or persistent lateness.

All of the above policy applies to persistent absentees, with the following additions:

- Children's names are recorded in the Persistent Absentee File in the School Office. All class teachers are aware who these children are.
- Any messages received regarding absence of these children are recorded in this file.
- If no message is received, either the office staff or Headteacher must be informed and must attempt to contact the parent at the earliest opportunity. If no contact is made or the message received is unsatisfactory, the EWO must be contacted. Again, all this should be recorded in the PA file.

## **Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time**

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a leave of absence form available from the school office and handed in **at least two weeks prior** to the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation **before** your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 3 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 3 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 97-100%

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

If a child's attendance falls below 92% at any point during the school year, parents/carers will be asked to attend a school attendance monitoring panel meeting. This will be carried out by the Headteacher and the early help support worker. At the meeting, barriers to attendance will be discussed and the school will work with parents and carers to improve the child's attendance. Parents and carers will also be asked to sign an attendance contract. They may also be requested to provide additional proof of absences such as a letter from their GP, proof of appointments or illness etc. This process will last a maximum of 12 weeks with a 6-week review period.

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

## **National framework for penalty notices**

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

**Whilst the Governing Body has responsibility for the Attendance Policy adopted by the school, decisions made by the Headteacher in relation to whether or not to authorise an individual pupil absence are final. These will not be subject to further consideration by governors.**

**Similarly, the Local Authority, and not the school, is the responsible body with the legal authority to prosecute and issue penalty notices in respect to unauthorised absences. Appeals in relation to decisions made by the Local Authority to exercise its statutory powers will not be subject to further review by the school or governing body.**

Review

The next review of this policy is in 1 years' time in 2025

Reviewed by Annette Lupton                      Date: 26.06.2024

## Leave of Absence Request Form

Please note - In September 2013 the Education (pupil Registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Derbyshire County Council will consider the issue of a penalty notice for any period of holiday absence which has not been authorised by the headteacher regardless of a child's wider school attendance.

Child's name: .....

Class: .....

Child's Address.....

.....

Name of Applicant(s) and address (if different).....

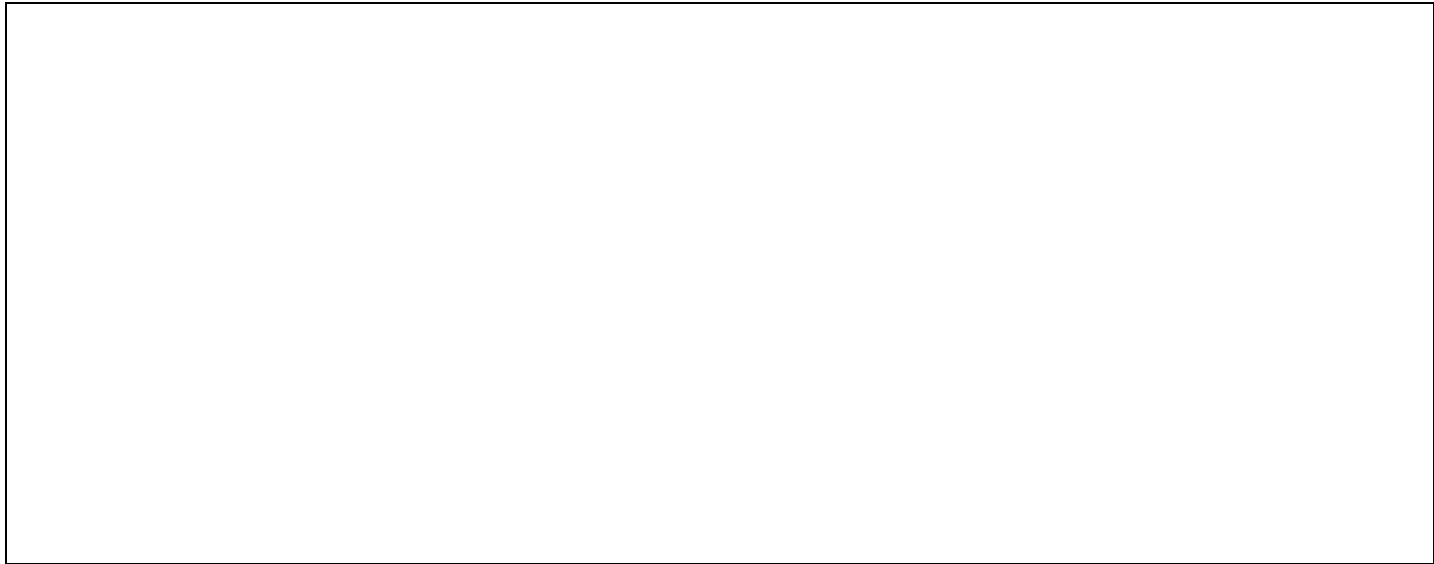
.....

The dates of the proposed absence from school are:

from: ..... to.....[inclusive]

Total number of school days requested .....

The reason for making this request during term time is fully explained as follows :-  
(Provide details and reason here explaining why the absence is 'exceptional')



I have enclosed a copy of a relevant document to support my request e.g. a letter of special invitation

I understand that absence will only be authorised for exceptional and unavoidable circumstances and that holidays will not be authorised.

Parent/carers name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

For School use: Date received:  
Attendance %:

Has been authorised / Has not been authorised

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Headteacher

**If the request is for a Family Holiday Please submit it before the holiday is booked.**