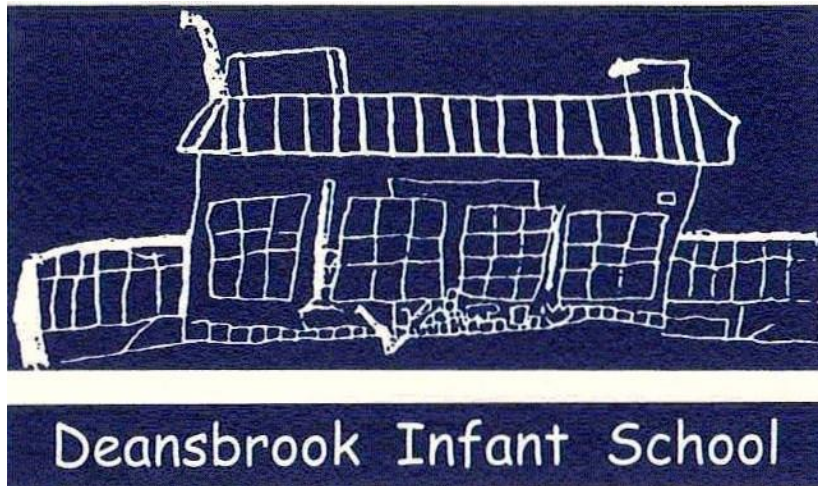


Deansbrook Infant School



Attendance Policy

Reviewed and ratified by the Governing Body: June 2022

Review Date: June 2024

RATIONALE

At Deansbrook Infant School we encourage and support all pupils to achieve the best attendance possible, to enable them to develop good habits of attendance and punctuality for their time at school and for their life experiences beyond. The school will make parents and carers aware of their legal obligations and the benefits to their child of good attendance and, when necessary, will put in place procedures to work with parents and carers to follow up poor attendance and punctuality.

Government expectations are that pupil school attendance should be in line with National Average. UK National School Attendance for 2019 (pre-Covid) was 96%. The Barnet target for school attendance is 96%. This applies to all children of statutory school age. Statutory school age commences the beginning of the term after a child's fifth birthday. However, we encourage all children to be in school, irrespective of their age.

AIMS OF POLICY

- To enable home and school to work together to ensure a good school attendance record for all children
- To enable children to develop good habits of attendance and punctuality for their whole school life to enable them to benefit fully from their time at school
- To make parents aware of their legal requirements

We rate attendance as outlined below:

ATTENDANCE	RATING
99% - 100%	Outstanding
98%	Excellent
97%	Very Good
96%	Good
93% - 95%	Requires Improving
91% - 92%	Unsatisfactory
90% or less	Cause for Concern (Persistent Absentee)

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The school's designated Attendance Lead is the Headteacher. The attainment and achievement of children depend on regular attendance at school. Any absence leads to missed learning and other experiences and may cause difficulties with social relationships. School attendance is a whole school issue as well as a Safeguarding issue.

Encouraging good attendance is the shared responsibility of the school, the parents and the pupils as well as partners in the Local Authority, the Police and Children's Social Care. Parents have a responsibility to see that their children receive appropriate education and it is the responsibility of the Local Authority, through its Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to ensure that this happens.

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually

Although primarily the responsibility of parents/carers, pupils will be encouraged to develop good habits of attendance and punctuality through work in assemblies, the PSHE curriculum and the school's reward and incentives systems.

THE SCHOOL

The school will:

- manage all pupil attendance matters in accordance with this policy
- provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality, following up any concerns when necessary
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and no message has been received to explain the absence
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition as well as robust monitoring, intervention and prevention
- regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils
- set targets to improve school attendance
- liaise with other schools and the LA in order to share best practice regarding school attendance
- liaise with the LA Education Welfare Team regarding any serious concerns
- regularly report to the Governing Body regarding issues of pupil attendance

The Headteacher will:

- Oversee that registers are kept accurately
- Work with the school's Attendance Officer in all attendance and punctuality issues
- Monitor attendance regularly
- Clarify authorised and unauthorised absences (refer to policy)
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Return absence figures to the DFE annually and to the LA as required
- Liaise with any other outside agencies relevant to a child's attendance at school
- Authorise requests for leave of absence, where appropriate
- Communicate regularly with parents/carers about the importance of good attendance eg through newsletters and website
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality with children through assemblies and reward systems

CLASS TEACHERS

Class teachers will:

- Keep an accurate and neat attendance register, according to the school's (and DFE) guidelines
- Complete information on authorised and unauthorised absences and lateness on children's annual reports
- Submit their class register to the office every morning by 8.55am (Nursery), 9.10am (Reception) and 9.10am (Key stage 1) and every afternoon by 12.40pm (Nursery), 12.50pm (Reception), 1.35pm (Year 1) and 1.50pm (Year 2)
- Send all absence letters and absence forms to the office on the day they are received
- Liaise with the Headteacher or Attendance Officer when they have concerns about a child's attendance and lateness
- Refer to the Attendance Officer any absences which need clarification in order to be authorised

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

The School Attendance Officer will:

- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition as well as robust monitoring, intervention and prevention

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality, following up any concerns when necessary
- File absence letters and completed absence and leave of absence request forms, in the relevant files
- Put pupils on and take pupils off role as appropriate in liaison with the Headteacher and in accordance with LA and DFE guidelines
- Inform the Headteacher of any concerns which arise regarding a child's attendance or lateness
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and no message has been received to explain the absence
- Consult parents/carers where concerns arise over children's attendance and lateness
- Regularly analyse attendance data to identify poor attendance and any patterns emerging
- Administer the relevant IT Attendance Programme i.e. Integris
- Complete the annual DFE absence return and any relevant LA returns
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer
- Meet with parents/carers (and the Headteacher if appropriate) and EWO to discuss pupil attendance issues
- Attend regular attendance meetings with the headteacher
- regularly report to the Governing Body regarding issues of pupil attendance through the Headteacher's report

OFFICE STAFF

- Keep a record of pupils who go home during the school day for medical reasons and appointments
- Ask parents/carers for prove of medical appointments and keep a record of any documentation
- Encourage parents/carers to bring children into school before and after medical appointments

GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body will:

- Be kept informed of any changes to the schools' attendance policy or guidance received from the LA and the DFE, and of the school's annual attendance data
- Support the school and parents/carers to ensure good attendance and punctuality for all pupils
- Ensure that information relating to attendance is made available to parents annually

THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER

The Education Welfare Officer will:

- Regularly liaise and attend meetings with the Headteacher and the School's Attendance Officer to monitor registers and discuss issues relating to pupil's attendance and lateness
- Regularly attend parent/carer meetings with the Attendance Office to discuss ongoing attendance issues
- Assist the school with ensuring good attendance and punctuality for all pupils
- Work with parents/carers and pupils to ensure good attendance and punctuality and that legal requirements are being met
- Advise and support staff in promoting good attendance and punctuality for pupils in their care
- Keep the school up to date with attendance initiatives and legal requirements

PARENTS/CARERS

Parents/carers will be expected to:

- Encourage and support their child in good habits of attendance and punctuality
- Inform the class teacher or Headteacher of any issues which affect their child's attendance at school
- be aware of this policy and plan their family holidays accordingly
- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually & prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend school
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- notify school immediately of any changes to their contact details or their nominated emergency contact details
- arrange holiday travel in accordance with the published school calendar
- arrange return flights such that their children can recover sufficiently before returning to school so as to avoid having to take an additional day off school
- arrange out of school appointments to minimise school absence
- Meet with the Headteacher or the Education Welfare Officer if requested to do so to discuss concerns regarding their child's attendance

If your child's attendance at the end of the year is...	your child would have lost approximately ...
95%	9 days
90%	19 days
85%	29 days
80%	38 days
75%	48 days
70%	57 days
65%	67 days

There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request. Also, a child arriving 20 minutes after the start of the school day will be recorded as unauthorised absence for that session.

Encouraging Good Attendance and Punctuality

1. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher greets all children and families in the morning in the Reception outdoor area and the main playground.
2. Each week we announce the class with the highest attendance the previous week. This is announced in assembly and also publicised in the school newsletter, which is then uploaded onto the school website. The class(es) with the highest weekly attendance are recorded on the hall class

attendance display. At the end of each half term the class who have had the highest attendance for the most weeks is given a treat eg a DVD with popcorn or an extra playtime

3. At the end of the academic year any children from Reception to Year 2 who still have 99% or 100% attendance are invited to a treat eg cinema trip*
4. Children who have had the most improved attendance over the academic year receive an award at the end of the summer term*

*Points 3 and 4 above have been suspended during the Covid pandemic but will be reinstated during the academic year 2022-2023

Principles of Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

Nursery

1. Full time Nursery starts at 8.45am.
2. The morning session starts at 8.45am and ends at 11.45am.
3. The afternoon session starts at 12.30pm and ends at 3.30pm.
4. Children are expected to be at school, on time every day.

Reception

1. School starts at 9.00am but the school has a 'soft start' and children can arrive from 8.45am and go straight into class.
2. The doors to the Reception outdoor area open at 8.45am
3. A member of staff will be present in the playground
4. We ask parents/carers to ensure their child is in school in plenty of time to hang up their coat and put their book bag in the appropriate place, so that they can be present in class for registration at 9.00am.
5. The doors are closed at 9.00am after which any child arriving must come into school via the office and be reported late by the adult bringing them.
6. The school office is responsible for signing children in via EntrySign (including their arrival time & reason for lateness) and recording them as late in the register.
7. Your child will be given a yellow late token to take to their class and hand to their class teacher.
8. **A child arriving after 9.15am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.**

Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and year 2)

1. School starts at 9.00am but the school has a 'soft start' and children can arrive from 8.45am and go straight into class
2. An adult must bring the child into the playground
3. A member of staff will be present in the playground
4. The doors are closed at 9.00am, after which any child arriving must come into school via the office and be reported late by the adult bringing them.
5. The school office is responsible for signing children in via EntrySign (including their arrival time & reason for lateness) and recording them as late in the register.
6. Your child will be given a yellow late token to take to their class and hand to their class teacher.
7. **A child arriving after 9.15am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.**

Absence procedures

1. The Attendance Officer is responsible for checking the correct entry of data into the school's registers regarding all pupil absences.
2. Pupils arriving late but before 9.15am are recorded as **late** but counted as present for the morning session.

3. Pupils arriving after these times are recorded as an unauthorised absence for the entire morning session.
4. Pupils out of school but attending therapy /specialist education appointments are recorded in the register as present (this is classified as, *attending education off-site*)
5. On the first day of a child's absence, parents contact the school (by telephone) by 9:00am to explain why their child is absent. A record of this communication, including date and time, is made on the electronic register.
6. School register records are legal documents, submittable as evidence in legal proceedings and are kept in school for seven years after the year group has left.

Children Missing From Education (CME)

Children who leave the school or go off roll for other reasons must be reported to the LA via a CMS form; this also applies to children missing for 10 days or more. Further guidance is given in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

HOW WE FOLLOW UP ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Daily Monitoring and Follow Up

We ask all parents to contact the school office by 9:00am to explain a child's absence including the specific details of any sickness.

1. For reasons of Safeguarding (Child Protection), this also applies to Nursery and Reception children below statutory school age so that we can account for the whereabouts of any children not present in school.
2. For reasons of Safeguarding (Child Protection), we operate a 'First Day Calling' policy - parents are telephoned on the first day of a pupil's absence if they have not contacted the school by 9.00am to explain their child's absence.
3. When the office cannot get hold of either parent of an absent child, the office will call all emergency contacts available to ascertain the child's whereabouts.
4. The attendance officer always brings to the Headteacher's attention (or the Deputy Headteacher in his/her absence) any unexplained pupil absence or any absence explanation that is felt to require further investigation.
5. Where necessary, the Headteacher (or Deputy Head in his/her absence) makes investigatory telephone calls to follow up an unexplained or suspicious absence.
6. If neither parent has contacted the school for five days, but it is understood from other sources (eg extended family; friends etc) that the children are safe but absent from school without authorisation, the school will make an immediate referral to the Education Welfare Service for investigation.
7. Where there are concerns as to the safety or welfare of the child, the school will endeavour to contact parents. This may be done in conjunction with Barnet Education Welfare Service, Children's Social Care, Health Services or the Police where appropriate.
8. After a few days authorised sickness absence (normally two to three days), the school office or Attendance Officer calls families of children absent due to sickness to enquire after the child's welfare. This may be followed up with a telephone call from the Headteacher or Deputy Head to discuss when the child can return to school.
9. We complete a regular analysis of class and whole school absence and punctuality data in order to identify trends and set targets for improvements.

Termly Monitoring and Follow Up

1. A detailed statistical examination of attendance and punctuality figures takes place every half-term. This includes whole school figures as well as pupil groups eg year groups, classes.
2. The Attendance Officer ensures that attendance data is available at pupil progress meetings so that any concerns regarding a child's punctuality and/or lateness can be considered

3. Each child's % attendance and punctuality is recorded on their end of year reports and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.
4. The Headteacher reports termly attendance figures to the Governing Body. This includes data regarding any fixed term exclusions.

Managing Long Term Sickness or Frequent Sickness

- In the instance of persistent absence due to long term or frequent sickness, the Local Authority EWO advice is that school fixes a set period (eg half a term) within which all future absences due to sickness can only be authorised with a doctor's note. The situation is then reviewed after the fixed period. The school is not liable for any costs that may be incurred to the family for doctor's notes.
- If a child is absent from school due to sickness for 15 consecutive days, s/he may be referred to the Barnet Education Welfare Service for home tuition. This will require a doctor's certificate confirming that the child is not fit to be in school.

Adverse Weather Conditions

- The school makes every effort to stay open during adverse weather conditions, taking into account all necessary Health and Safety aspects (for example condition of the site, staff:pupil ratios etc). When the school is open in severe weather conditions eg snow, parents are expected to make every effort to bring their children to school especially when other parents living in the same locations are successfully bringing their children to school. During periods of heavy snow, the registers remain open until later to allow for longer journey times. It is understood that some families living further away from school may have more challenging journeys. Parents are expected to telephone the school office to discuss this situation in these circumstances. School may close earlier on heavy snow days to facilitate an easier journey home for the children.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Parents are asked to arrange **routine** dental & optician check-ups for their children in the school holidays/out of school hours as well as non emergency GP appointments in out of school hours where possible.

Where a pupil is required to be absent from school for a medical / dental appointment, parents are asked to bring the appointment letter/card/email/text to the school office. Parents are asked to minimise time their children miss school for medical appointments by requesting only the time required for the appointment (and travel) with no extra time for convenience.

Where required in school time, we ask parents to endeavour to arrange medical / dental etc appointments such that children are in school for register times (8.45am and 12.30pm (Nursery), 9.00am and 12.40pm (Reception); 9.00am and 1.25pm (Y1) and 9.00am and 1.40pm (Y2).

Children are expected to be absent from school only for the time necessary to attend an appointment and not any extra time for convenience. This may, for example, involve bringing a child in for registration and returning later in the morning to collect them for an appointment.

Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence

- Parents have no right to remove their children from school for the purpose of a holiday.
- Parents may request permission for an absence in *exceptional circumstances*.

Leave of absence may only be granted by the Headteacher (or Deputy Head in his/her absence) if an application has been made in advance to the Headteacher by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides and the Headteacher considers that leave

of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

Absence for economic reasons: The Headteacher may not authorise absence for holidays or other circumstances on the grounds of cost. This includes cases where families seek to visit family for longer periods for value-for-money reasons.

Special Leave of absence: Each request for leave of absence will be considered on its own merits, bearing in mind elements such as family crisis or special occasions. This does not include economic factors or convenience.

Headteachers may not authorise long absences for family occasions such as weddings, birthdays etc. Such occasions are not an opportunity to tack on a holiday. The cost issue is a matter for families, not the school.

Families are required to submit their request in writing using a school 'exceptional leave of absence' form. This should be submitted to the school office at least four school weeks in advance, together with the relevant evidence required for the absence.

The Headteacher may consider authorising Exceptional Leave of Absence:

1. when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
2. for time necessary to attend out of school exams eg music, dance etc;
3. for time necessary to attend a close family funeral
4. for time necessary to attend an embassy for passport / visa renewals;
5. other **exceptional** family reasons.

The Headteacher will take the following into account when considering a request for term time Exceptional Leave of Absence:

Time of year

1. no exceptional leave of absence will be authorised during the first week of term in September or the last week before the summer holidays (unless there are truly exceptional circumstances);
2. exceptional leave of absence will not be authorised at the beginning and ends of school holidays since there is sufficient time provided in the school calendar for families to arrange their travel arrangements.

Exceptional leave of absence can only be considered for authorisation for a child whose attendance record is at least 95% for the current year;

Examples of when absence may be unauthorised

1. No explanation of a child's absence is forthcoming within five working days.
2. The school is dissatisfied with the explanation (for example, all the children from one family are off sick for one day or reported sick the day after a holiday etc).
3. The parent has been advised that absences will not be authorised without appropriate medical confirmation, and no medical confirmation is given (this is usually when a child's attendance falls below 90%).
4. The pupil is seen shopping or in a public place during school hours.
5. The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (eg a birthday; etc).
6. The pupil is absent from school for the purpose of an unauthorised holiday.
7. The pupil is absent from school due to not returning to school from an authorised holiday at the given date.
8. The children are absent without prior explanation and when attempting to contact the parents, there is no answer from home or work landlines and when calling the parents' mobile telephones, a foreign ringtone is received.
9. Pupil(s) return to school late from a holiday due to a reported flight delay or ticket confusion, but parents cannot provide requested evidence of the original ticket booking that would have allowed the children to return to school on time.

10. The pupil, on returning to school, explains an alternative reason for the absence (this will be discussed further with the child's parents).
11. Children **regularly** arriving late as a result of traffic will have their lateness recorded as an unauthorised absence – parents are expected to anticipate regular traffic and plan their travel arrangements accordingly.
12. Children **regularly** arriving late to school as a result of parents having to take siblings to another school / nursery first will have their lateness recorded as an unauthorised absence – when choosing to send children to different educational settings, it is understood that parents ensure that they can bring and collect their children to and from the settings at the correct times.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES (FPNs)

- All schools have the authority to recommend their Local Authority issue parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice when they take their children out of school without authorisation.
- The Barnet EWO accepts requests from Headteachers and other authorities but may decline to do so if it feels there is a need to explore a case further or in the case of significant delay in making the request.
- Income from penalty notices is used to fund their enforcement. In the event that income exceeds costs, surplus income passes to the Council's general account. Schools receive no income from penalty notices.
- All parents whose children attend a maintained school in Barnet are subject to the rules in respect of penalty notices, regardless of where they live. The borough of residence is notified of the action being taken.
- Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent, for each child, for each period of absence. Thus, where two parents take three children on an unauthorised holiday, a total of six notices are issued for the single episode.
- Parents can be issued a maximum of 3 penalty notices each in respect of the same child in any one calendar year.

The Headteacher will consider requesting Fixed Penalty Notices be issued for unauthorised absences such as:

Absence without the school's permission. This includes:

- taking children out of school without permission on the day(s) immediately preceding or following a school holiday;
- taking children out of school after having a request for absence NOT authorised;
- taking children out of school at any other time without permission;

Unauthorised lateness to school

The Barnet Code of Practice (September 2015) advises that an FPN be issued in situations where a child has six unauthorised lates in any four-week period.

Failing to improve a child's poor attendance.

A parent fails to improve his or her child's school attendance following casework carried out by the Education Welfare Officer.

Each penalty notice is £60 if paid within the early-payment period, up to the 21st day after issue, otherwise the penalty notice will be £120. If the notice remains unpaid after the 28th day, the Local Authority prosecutes the parent in the Magistrates' Court for the original non-attendance offence under The Education Act 1996, section 444, and not for non-payment of the penalty notice. If found guilty, parents will have a criminal record, possibly receive a fine of up to £1000, for a first offence, and be required to pay costs to the Local Authority.

Parents have no right of appeal against a penalty notice. There is no right of appeal for parents but the Local Authority will examine any evidence provided that would show

that a mistake had been made. Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support an argument and must deal directly with the Local Authority as the matter will not be the responsibility of the school

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer and the relevant committee of the Governing Body, and updated in conjunction with any advice, new initiatives and legal requirements received from the LA and the DFE.

Attendance Procedures

Daily	Weekly	End of each half term	End of academic year
Ensure that all registers are completed accurately and on time every day	The percentage of children attending school in every class will be recorded in the newsletter each week.	Reward presented to the class who has the won the most number of weeks during the half term with the highest attendance	At the end of the academic year any child who has achieved 100% for the year will receive a certificate and a special reward.
Make telephone contact with any parents whose children are absent without authorisation	Weekly percentages recorded on the school website	Reward for class eg extra time on the climbing frame	Parents are informed about which class has the best attendance
Record on the class registers reasons for absence or lateness	Ongoing visual display in school hall which shows classes that achieved the highest percentage of attendance each week		Awards for children who have had the most improved attendance over the academic year.
<p>All families (unless there are exceptional circumstances) with less than 90% attendance will be sent a letter from the EWO. If there is no improvement, the parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the headteacher, the EWO and the attendance officer. All absences for children from a family being monitored by the EWO will need evidence (eg. Note from Doctor) to be authorised. If attendance still does not improve, legal proceedings will be initiated.</p>			