

Attendance Policy

Dormers Wells Primary School



Believe Aspire Flourish

**Diversity, Opportunity, Resilience, Moral values, Excellence, Respect,
Self-Belief**

Last reviewed, ratified and approved by the Full Governing Body	December 2024 (Reviewed earlier in light of DfE changes)
Next review due by	March 2026

This statutory policy will be reviewed, as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and as a minimum every 3 years (GB determined).

Dormers Wells Primary School

Attendance Policy

Designated Senior Lead for Attendance: Nic Simpson

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School Attendance Officer: Kim Scott

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Regular attendance is defined to be in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.

Supreme court Ruling April 2017

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an 'authorisable' reason to be absent; (registration regulations 2006 (amended). Section 444 of the education act 1996). "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence." A pupil's Unauthorised Absence is an offence for the **parent**.

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1. Aims

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 high attendance (96%+), including

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils good time keeping for all children and groups of children
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of efficient and full-time attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absenteeism (<90% and <50% attendance)
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders is an indicator of safe, healthy and successful children
- Pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance compared with the lowest attainment (DfE 2024)
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attendance encourages responsible learning habits and prepares children for higher education and for their working life

2. Legislation and guidance

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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's:

- [School census guidance](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Recognising and Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance, as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 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, and/or authorising the **designated senior leader responsible for attendance**, to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

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3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing attendance across the school, promoting an ethos of good attendance
- Offering a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Regularly Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence and oversight of data analysis, identifying trends, defined groups
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff, including: Devising specific strategies to address areas identified through data
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues, e.g. Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Nicola Simpson** and can be contacted via **0208 571 1230**.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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/designated senior leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is **Kim Scott** and can be contacted via **0208 571 1230**.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance, for both morning and afternoon sessions, on a daily basis, using the correct codes (**see Appendix 1**), and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

3.6 School admin/office staff

School admin/office 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 Pupil & Family Worker in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time, unless there is an 'authorisable' reason to be absent. Only the school can authorise an absence

- Call the school to report their child's absence before **9am** on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. Advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. Make sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contact details
- Ensure that (where possible) all non-emergency medical and dental appointments are made out of school hours or made during school holidays.
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Provide a timely reason, satisfactory to the school, for an absence; otherwise, the absence will remain unauthorised
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the family and pupil worker/attendance and welfare officer, who can be contacted via 0208 571 1230
- Not plan any holidays during term time
- Keep the school updated by telephone, email, or letter of any changes of circumstances.
- Provide medical evidence for: any absence relating to illness directly before or after a school holiday; an absence of illness lasting more than 3 days or for pupils on the school's persistent absentees list.

Absence should only happen when:

- a) Your child is significantly/symptomatically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be an observable symptom/s; 'feeling unwell' is not enough. We may ask for medical verification where absence claimed as illness is frequent, prolonged or where there are absences immediately before or after a school holiday.
- b) If there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty, the school will ask for evidence
- c) If your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance, please let us know; the school will ask for evidence in such cases.

If you are leaving the area or changing schools, please complete a **Leaver's Form** (available at the school office/on website). Schools and the local authority are obliged to track pupils from school to school, even if you are leaving to live abroad. Follow-up enquiries on inadequate information can be intrusive. As well as calls, enquiries include unannounced visits to your given address.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than at the end of Year 6) parents are asked to:

- Give the school comprehensive information about your plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, who your child will be living with and your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing. A Leaver's Form is available from the school office, which you should complete. (A destination country or another named Local Authority without other details is not sufficient).
- When a child leaves and we do not have information about where they have gone/will be educated, then he/she is considered to be a '**Child Missing Education**'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (formerly Social Services), the Police, benefits/council tax records and other agencies, to try to locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.
<https://www.egfl.org.uk/services-children/children-missing-education-cme>

Withdrawals:

- Parents who remain resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed

start date at another school or are undertaking to educate the child at home (Elective Home Education). If the latter, this must be confirmed in writing to the school by the parent. Pupils remain registered at school until such conditions are satisfied.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure efficient and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils of statutory school age (Education Act 1996). This is the legal requirement. The Local Authority School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families and other partnership agencies to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or are given a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

3.9 The School will:

- While we expect a parent to contact us with a reason for each absence, on occasions they might forget, we will endeavour to call, text, or otherwise contact parents. Schools have a safeguarding role so on occasion, home visits may be made by school staff or by the Local Authority Link Attendance Officer if a parent cannot be otherwise contacted.
- Where a child has a Social Worker, we will inform him/her of absences
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality.
- Express 'a concern' either verbally or by letter. If attendance does not improve or explanations for absence or lateness are unsatisfactory, you may be invited to a meeting. The school will also outline what the attendance expectations are and what actions will follow
- We will seek to support you in various ways including:
 - a) We may invite you to participate in an Early Help and Assessment Plan (EHAP)
 - b) You may be invited to agree an Attendance Contract.
 - c) A referral may also be made to external partners, including the Local Authority School Attendance Service, whose officers visit the school regularly to review and support attendance and punctuality issues.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Regularly inform parents about your child's attendance and absence levels.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in the school literature, on our website, at open evenings, in the Home-School Agreement and in pupil's annual reports and during meetings.
- Publish our attendance data on the school website
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality (**see section 6**)
- If your child has a documented medical condition, we will wish to discuss this with you. We will devise a care plan with you to support your child in school; this might also require us to refer to the school Nursing Team or on occasion contact your GP/health professional. The school will consider whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, and make referrals in a timely manner, working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support. In some cases, this may include a referral for Alternative Provision.
- Share attendance data regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Service
- Where attendance concerns persist, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parent/s (and pupil where they are old enough and able to understand and participate).
- Escalate the matter to the Local Authority Attendance Service (this includes unauthorised absence due to significant lateness) for prosecution, where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session (morning) of each school day and once during the second session (afternoon). It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Computer registers should be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes or alternatively electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made (preserved for at least three years)

Pupils must arrive in school and be in class by **8:50am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:05am (not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place). A pupil arriving after the register has closed will be registered 'O'.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm (KS1), 1:15pm (KS2) and will be kept open until 1.05pm AND 1.20pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin/office staff (see also section 7).

Notification procedures:

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to **section 5** to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

There is **no entitlement** to time off during term time. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. Parents should request leaves of absence (LOA), following these guidelines:

- Each application for leave will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merit.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will term time leave be granted.
- Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements.
- If attending an emergency abroad, the school must be notified and documentation/proof of flights provided before leaving the country.
- No applications for leave of absence will be considered in Years with statutory assessments, e.g., Year 2 and 6, or at the start of any academic year. *If a child is not present at the beginning of a school term, we cannot guarantee that a place will remain available on their return to school.*
- If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action. In certain instances, the child may also lose their school place.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Good punctuality is a pre-requisite to good learning and shows a respect between pupil, family, and school. Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality at the start of the school day. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child. If showing up late to school becomes a habit, children may develop the notion that lateness is acceptable behavior. This belief can negatively impact their future work ethic and employment opportunities.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

- Morning registration is at 8:50am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom. You need to aim for

your child to come through the school gate between 8:40am and 8:49am.

- Registers close at **9.05am**
- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information is discussed at regular meetings with the local authority Attendance Officer and can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.
- Arrival after the close of registration where there is not an acceptable reason, such as a medical appointment, will be marked as a missed session; unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance. The U code has the value of an unauthorised absence. When late arrivals are frequent or persistent, we will want to discuss this with you to assess what support or guidance you or your child may need. A referral may also be made to the Local Authority Attendance Service and or other external partners for additional support and monitoring.
- Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time and ready to learn.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school is unable to establish a reason for absence, a member of staff will also contact emergency contacts parents/carers have provided to the school. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police, social care or an appropriate safeguarding body
- Schools have a safeguarding role, so home visits may be made, by school staff and on occasion by the Local Authority Link Attendance Office, if a parent cannot be otherwise contacted.
- Where a child has a social worker/foster carer, we will inform them if we are unable to contact the parent, regarding an absence.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, for example, via DOJO, letters, parents evening and end of year written reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances*

5.1.2 Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. That is when the school accept the reason given for absence.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher’s discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time, if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We realise that there are rare and unavoidable occasions when there might be a particular problem or emergency, that causes your child to be absent, such as *sudden bereavement, unexpected parental illness, or a family crisis. We define ‘exceptional circumstances’ as these *.

If this happens, please let us know and we shall try to deal with the matter sympathetically. Following such incidents, parents are expected to make any necessary arrangements for their child to return to school as soon as possible (ideally the next day). If the absence is likely to be prolonged, parents must write to the Headteacher, outlining the reasons.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Please note that when illness is a frequent reason claimed for absence, the school will ask for evidence other than a parent’s word to allow for further authorisation of absences.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via website and/or school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (**see sections 4.2 and 4.3** for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parents travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is

known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed
- Flexi-schooling requests (e.g. EHCP pupil with SEMHD needs)

5.1.3 Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out / Going shopping
- Because you have visitors
- Because you did not know school was open
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Parent’s illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence, or the school considers the reason given for the absence as unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior to a period of school closure (at the end and beginnings of terms and half terms) or following a period of authorised leave, unless satisfactory evidence to justify this has been provided
- Term time holiday

Please be aware that unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (fines) or other legal action. *Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines) 3**

5.1.4 Exceptional Leave - Term Time Leave of Absence

Amendments to the 2006 School Attendance Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g., if there is an emergency) at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be considered. All leave is granted at the Headteacher’s decision. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to complete an application form well in advance and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements (forms are available at the school office or on website). Parents sometimes confuse ‘telling’ the school as being good enough; this is not so.

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening (to add link to term dates). Absence claimed as illness before

or after a school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and medical evidence produced on return to school. Otherwise, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised leave.

If you experience unexpected delays in returning from a trip abroad or within the UK, for whatever reason, the school will require documentary evidence accompanied with proof of original return dates i.e., tickets or an official travel plan showing intent to return on time. Medical Documentation should be in English. In certain circumstances, if a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term and absence is extended, their school place may be at risk.

- If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised, and you may be liable for a Fixed-Penalty Notice. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established, he/she may be regarded as a 'Child Missing Education' and their place cannot be guaranteed.
- Except for leave taken in an emergency, retrospective approval cannot be given without an application having been made. Satisfactory evidence of an emergency will need to be provided
- A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent in respect to each of their children in line with the local authority Fines protocol.

5.2 Legal sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

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. A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent, in respect to each of their children in line with: [Ealing School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notice Protocol](#)

From August 24, If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. See [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) (Pg.56 National framework for penalty notices).

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**.

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school's strategies for rewarding and improving attendance (Adapted as required) include:

- celebrating good attendance in assemblies or on displays
- class trophy
- movie afternoon with popcorn
- bouncy castle
- raffle prizes, e.g. a tablet, scooter, bike

7. Attendance monitoring

Dormers Wells Primary School regularly monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. We tailor our approach to our context and the needs of particular cohorts of pupils.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level, year group and cohort level
Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will compare attendance data to the national average, at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils 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; use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- 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 severe absence, and their families (see section 7.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads 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.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE) irrespective of the reason for absence as a **Persistent Absentee**. Once a child's attendance falls below 50%, they are termed **Severely Absent**. Both scenarios present a severe problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up, these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement, particularly at GCSE.

Attendance (%)	Real terms	Missed lessons
Attendance of 95% for the year	= 10 days that your child has been absent, that is 2 full school weeks of your child's learning missed for that year.	50 missed lessons
Attendance of 80% for the year	= 38 days absent per year; that is over 7 school weeks missed.	200 lessons
Punctuality Arriving 5 minutes late every day	= over 3 days lost each year.	20 lessons

Also SEE Appendix 3

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent, the Local Authority, and other external partners to support parents to improve matters. In such cases, parents will be offered an Early Help Assessment and might be invited to agree a Parenting Attendance Contract with the school or the Local Authority as a way of managing improvement.

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority (this includes absence due to significant lateness). The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve. **Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action.** Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices (fines) 3*1 prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

* If you receive a school absence penalty notice, you have three options

Option 1: Within 21 calendar days of receipt of the penalty notice, pay £80

Option 2: Between 22 and 28 calendar days after receipt of the penalty notice, pay £160

(Payment of the penalty discharges liability for the offence.)

Option 3: Do not pay the penalty notice. In such cases, you will be automatically summoned to appear in court for an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 resulting in prosecution for irregular attendance where, on conviction, a fine of up to £1,000 may be imposed as well as a record of criminal conviction.

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 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 5.2, above)
- Send 'traffic light' letters,
- Engage in closer monitoring

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Useful links, documents, definitions to read in conjunction with this document

- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term used to describe children and young people (CYP) who experience challenges in attending school due to negative feelings (such as anxiety). EBSA is commonly associated with emotional and physical distress, and a reluctance to attend school, which can lead to reduced attendance and further anxiety regarding school. Therefore, consideration to amended timetables for example, starting school at 9am is taken into consideration.
- **Working together to improve school attendance** – see page 11
- [SEN support.](#)
- [supporting pupils with medical conditions at school.](#)
- [UNCRC summary-1_1.pdf \(unicef.org.uk\)](#)

As the barriers to attendance evolve quickly, the policy should be reviewed and updated as necessary. In doing so, schools should seek the views of pupils and parents.

Appendix 1

Absence and Attendance Codes explained

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence, in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of and the reasons for absence.

Attendance codes- used in official registers and shared with parents in end of year reports.
*These Administrative Codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#):

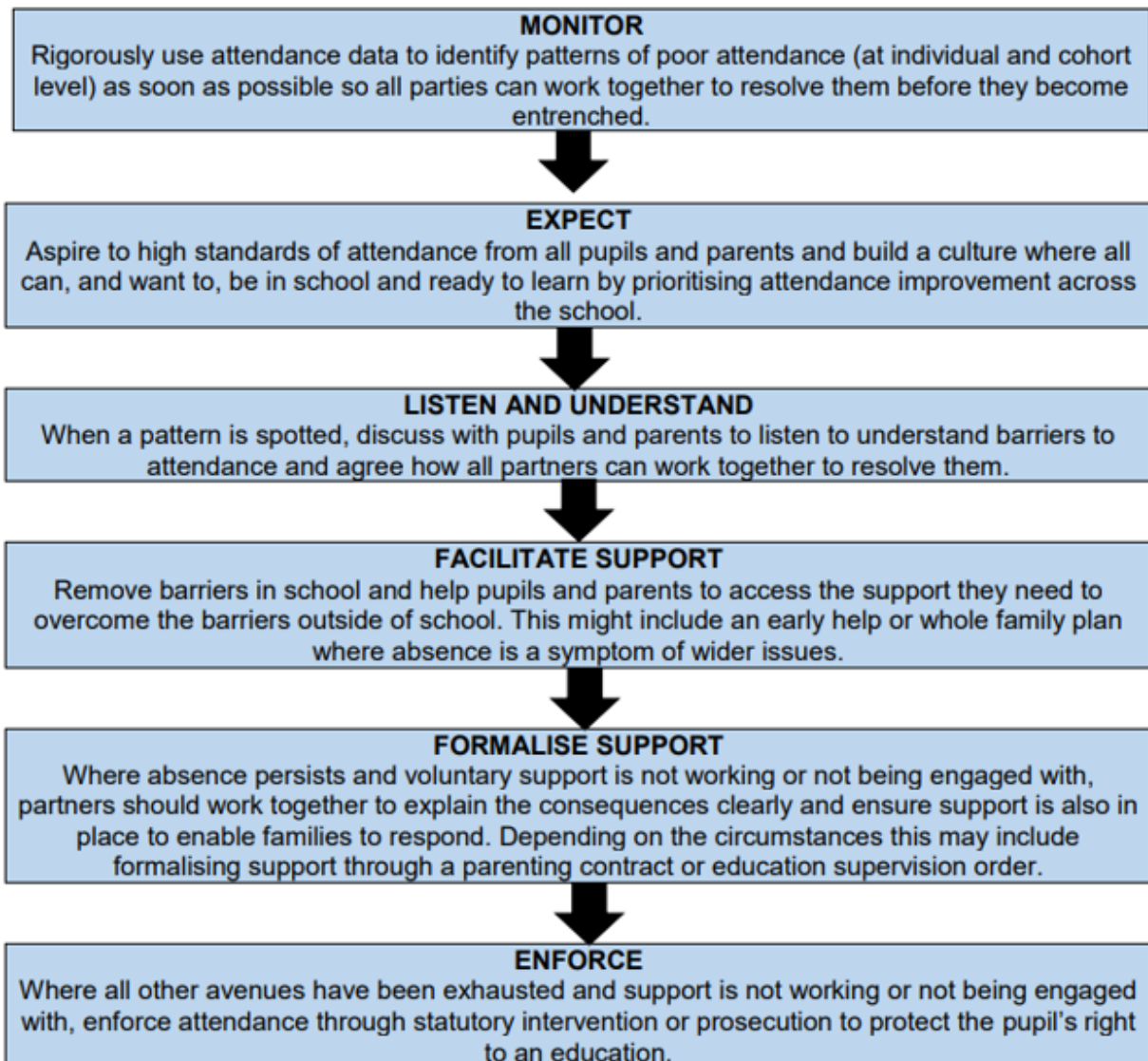
Code	Present codes explained
/ \	present during registration (am/pm)
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
Attending a place other than the school	
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
V	educational visit or trip
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
W	work experience
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W code
D	dual registered

Code	Authorised absence codes explained
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	medical or dental appointment
J1	job/school/college interview
S	study leave
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
C	exceptional circumstances

Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
E	suspended or permanently excluded
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised absence codes explained	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative codes	
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)

Appendix 2 Multi agency approach

It is expected that all partners will work together to ensure the following:



WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

“Every day counts and every child matters!”

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.