



Donisthorpe Primary School

Attendance Policy

Next review February 2023

Aims

Donisthorpe Primary School is a successful school and the children's attendance plays its part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. This attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that children attend regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecution.

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteacher's should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Absences soon mount up – see the impact of time off over one school year

Attendance	Days Missed	Lessons Missed	Hours Missed
95%	9.5	Approximately 36 lessons	47
90%	19	Approximately 76 lessons	95
85%	28.5	Approximately 116 lessons	142
80%	38	Approximately 152 lessons	190
75%	47.5	Approximately 152 lessons	237

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Implement a clear and coherent whole school policy on attendance
- Ensure that all staff subscribe to a consistent, whole school approach to improving and maintaining pupil attendance
- Detail parental responsibilities for attendance in the school prospectus and at admission meetings giving a clear message on the law, times of school day and procedures in cases of absence
- Provide curriculum support for individual pupils with an identified need in order to prevent disaffection which may lead to non-attendance
- Introduce reward and incentive initiatives
- Inform parents of attendance initiatives by letter, newsletters and at Parents' Evening
- Make contact with parents/carers on 1st day of absence



Donisthorpe Primary School

Attendance Policy

Next review February 2023

- Monitor all pupils with less than 95% attendance
- Send letters to parents/carers regarding concerns where attendance falls below 93%
- Monitor attendance patterns and punctuality and using data for comparative purposes
- Reward high attendance 98% or above
- Keep school governors informed of all attendance matters via termly Headteacher's reports

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all children's absence thoroughly. PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our school system. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed. Support for PA children is put in to place if needed.

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, parents are requested to inform the school office before 9:30am if their child is to be absent from school. If, by that time, a child is absent and we do not know the reason, we will try to contact the parent. If there is no reply we will try at least once more.

When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence, unless the parent has previously notified us by telephone.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. If we cannot contact the first contact, then all contact numbers will be tried in order to ensure the safety of the child.

Telephone Numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Understanding types of absence:

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absence

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



Donisthorpe Primary School
Attendance Policy
Next review February 2023

- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child.

The Headteacher has the discretionary power to grant leave if it is considered there to be special circumstances relating to that application.

Special Circumstances DO NOT include the circumstances such as:

- Wanting to go away for the weekend
- Wanting to take a family holiday
- Friends or family organising a holiday without realising when school holidays fall
- The financial implications of going on holiday (i.e. it's cheaper to take a holiday during school time than during school holiday time)
- Taking a Friday off "to avoid the traffic" etc. when going away for the weekend
- A day off for a special occasion (e.g. birthday)
- Flight times (etc.) not coinciding with school hours
- Leaving school early on the last day of term

No absences will be authorised:

- During the week of, or the week before; Year 6 SATs for any reason other than illness
- During winter weather (e.g. snow & ice) when school has managed to stay open, unless school has been previously notified (e.g. hospital appointment), children are expected to attend school as usual.

In brief, the regulations mean that:

- Parents cannot demand a leave of absence as an automatic right
- Parental requests must be in writing and the Headteacher may ask for additional information before making a decision
- The Headteacher will not apply blanket policies to approve/reject all applications
- All requests must be considered on their own merits but there must be special circumstances before the request is granted
- Extended periods of absence will be granted only in exceptional circumstances

Parents may request a copy of their child's attendance record from the school office.



Donisthorpe Primary School
Attendance Policy
Next review February 2023

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school we will following the separate policy: Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has repeated unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians may be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Attendance Improvement Service for advice, where a visit to the home may be sought to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

'Where parents or guardians repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis and term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may also attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.'

Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will receive information via a termly report from the Headteacher.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers