



# **Attendance Policy**

**Written by the Headteacher of Durand**

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# Durand Primary School

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

When the school is open we expect all children on roll to attend every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We reward those children whose attendance is very good. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child(ren) attend school on a daily basis.

\*in this policy parents will cover parents / carers or guardians

### Definitions

#### 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 and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. The Headteacher will determine whether the reason given justifies the absence. If the Headteacher believes there is no justification then the absence will be unauthorised.
- Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. If the reasons are not valid then 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.
- The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### If a Child is Absent

When a child is absent we expect parents to notify school on the first day of absence that their son/daughter will not be in school stating the reason for their absence. If the child is likely to be ill on subsequent days then the parent must continue to contact the school on a daily basis.

If a child has a medical appointment then a note sent to school or a phone call to the office may be made prior to the day of absence.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent, in order to check on the safety of the child. This is in line with the school's approach of monitoring attendance.

## **Requests for Leave of Absence**

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most of learning opportunities. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event. We expect parents to contact the school in good time to enable the Headteacher to consider their request. Each request is considered on an individual basis as to whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

We naturally prefer parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods. Each request for an absence due to a holiday in term time is considered on an individual basis as to whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised. A request for an annual holiday during term time should be made **prior to booking the holiday**.

The Headteacher may authorise a child's absence from school for an annual holiday but will initially need to take a view as to whether there are exceptional circumstances that require a family to take a holiday in term time.

If this request is viewed as being exceptional then the Headteacher will determine the impact of the absence request on the child's attendance. If after the absence, the child's attendance is below the school's target then the whole of the absence would not be authorised. The Headteacher may be able to authorise some of the absence request. It is essential that parents speak to the Headteacher before booking any holiday.

## **Long-term Absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence due to a lengthy period of illness and will result in the child being off for 15 or more consecutive days the school will contact the Local Authority and a request will be made for the child to be provided with home tuition.

## **Repeated Unauthorised Absence**

The school will contact the parent on a daily basis of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the attendance does not improve, the school will then contact the Education Welfare Department, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents understand the seriousness of the situation. The education Welfare Service could in the event of more than 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in a term issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or proceed with legal action.

## **Rewards for Good Attendance**

As a school we operate two types of reward for good attendance every half term:

- Class attendance rewards
- Individual attendance rewards

### **Class Attendance Rewards**

- Class attendance is shared with parents via Schoop every week
- Each week during our celebration assembly the class with the highest attendance and the class with the most attendees that week are awarded a 'star' which is displayed in the school hall
- At the end of each half term the class with the most stars achieved for the best attendance for that half term selects a class reward to celebrate their excellent overall attendance

### **Individual Attendance Rewards**

- Each half term pupils who have achieved 100% attendance receive a '100% Attendance' certificate and a Gold '100% attendance' sticker in class
- We also reward pupils each half term who have not reached 100% but have achieved 95% or above with a Silver 'Great Attendance' sticker
- At the end of the year any pupil who has achieved 100% for the whole year receives a Gold 100% Attendance Award certificate and a 'goodie bag' of attendance gifts

### **Attendance Letters**

Each half term, in conjunction with the above, a standard letter is sent to every parent indicating their child's attendance percentage for that half term – 100% Gold standard letter, 95% and above Green standard letter, 85-94.9% Amber standard letter, below 84.9% Red standard letter.

Parents will also receive individual letter(s) if their child's attendance is causing an on-going concern. In the first instance a letter inviting parents to attend a formal meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be sent if their child's attendance is below 90%. If attendance does not improve then the school will formally refer to the Education Welfare which could lead to prosecution.

### **Attendance targets**

The school sets attendance targets each year in consultation with the Local Authority. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years and latest benchmarking data. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

### **Monitoring and review**

Class attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by the Headteacher as this informs the weekly class reward system. The results of this are shared with parents via our Schoop messaging service.

Individual children's attendance is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on a monthly basis. This will be discussed with the Headteacher and action taken should there be concerns about levels of individual pupil attendance. This is also monitored half termly in-line with the individual attendance reward system and standard letter process.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way on a daily basis. 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 guardian.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Headteacher:**

**Chair of Governors:**

**Date:**