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Date of publication	October 2022
Review date	October 2026

DOWNVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body are responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for Downview Trust
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 School Leaders

School leaders are responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Governing Body
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where appropriate

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at each school

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 The school attendance team

The school attendance team at Downview Primary School 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 when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Teachers

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office in a timely manner.

3.6 School Administrative staff

Office Staff will:

- › Take calls from parents /carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Follow up any non-attendance where no reason has been received asap but at least by 10am

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before the start of the day on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their children
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

4. Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

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 of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark 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.

The register for the first session will be taken within 15 minutes from the start of the session and will be kept open for a further 15 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken within 10 minutes of the start of the afternoon session and will be kept open for a further 5 minutes

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before the start of the school day or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

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 parent/carer will be notified of this.

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. Parents may be routinely asked for proof 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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Good attendance and punctuality are both vital to your child's education. A child arriving late may disrupt not only their own learning by missing the start of lessons but also that of others. Some feel embarrassed and upset going into class once lessons are underway. To avoid this please ensure your child arrives in good time.

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

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 we cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, schools may contact the police or children's social services
- 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 West Sussex support services

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Schools will report share information on their child's attendance on a termly basis.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Headteachers will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. 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 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 the Downview Trust's leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. This might include evidence of a medical procedure, travel details including flight details, workplace contracts that limit timings of holidays, wedding bookings etc.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – evidence of appointments will be sought
- 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
- Traveller pupils 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

Term-time absence will not normally be authorised for holidays unless there are specific reasons why travel could only take place within term time. In these circumstances further evidence will need to be provided.

Failure to provide requested evidence in a timely manner will result in the request NOT being authorised and may also result in safeguarding concerns and Fixed Penalty Notices being issued.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

From 19th August 2024 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.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- 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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Only two fines can be issued within a 3 year rolling period, a third referral will lead to alternative action.

First referral – the first time unauthorised absence is referred and leads to a FPN being issued, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Second referral – the second time unauthorised absence is referred and leads to a FPN being issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, with no reduction offered for early payment.

Third referral – the third time unauthorised absence is referred a FPN will not be issued and instead either result in the:

- Matter being presented directly to the Magistrates Court. A prosecution can result in the parent receiving a criminal record and fines of up to £2,500.
- Matter being addressed via an alternative pathway with an investigation Officer being allocated.

This is in a 3 year rolling period.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Downview staff will routinely celebrate good attendance through a variety of ways including assemblies, rewards etc

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Schools will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- 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. Attendance data for each school will be shared with the Board of Trustees on a termly basis.

7.2 Analysing attendance

Schools will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and 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

Schools will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to classteachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Send letters informing parents that a child's attendance is causing concern and if necessary, arrange follow up meetings

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum on an annual basis. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Board of Trustees.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Downview Attendance Strategy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupils is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend school because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend school because they cannot be practicably accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site is unexpectedly closed	Every pupils absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable case is not covered by the other codes
Absent - unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 Fixed Penalty Notice

FIXED PENALTY NOTICE

- The Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) scheme for unsatisfactory school attendance is in use in West Sussex. A FPN fine is given for unauthorised absence from school.
- Please note, only a Headteacher can authorise absence from school.
- The Trust have agreed that no holiday will be approved by the Headteacher, except in exceptional circumstances.
- FPNs are issued in West Sussex by the local authority through Pupil Entitlement Investigation and will be used for the following.
 - **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**- When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions or more recorded as unauthorised codes (N,O, U) within a 10 week period. A school day is divided into 2 sessions, am and pm. A formal letter will be sent to parents informing them that a referral will be made for a FPN to be issued.
 - **UNAUTHORISED HOLIDAY**- For unauthorised holiday in term time coded as (G). Parents will be aware of the consequences of taking unauthorised holiday and knowingly removing their child from school. Again a school day is divided into 2 sessions, am and pm. A FPN will be issued for a minimum of 10 sessions or more of unauthorised holiday within a 10 week period.
 - **PERSISTENT LATENESS** - For persistent lateness at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as unauthorised absence coded as (U). A minimum of 10 sessions or more in a 10 week period. Again a formal letter will be sent to parents informing them that a referral will be made for a FPN to be issued.
 - **EXCLUSION**-For a pupil being in a public place during the first 5 days of an exclusion coded as (E). Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

Fines for FPN are £80 if paid within 21 days per parent per child after which time will increase to £160 per parent per child. The fine will need paying in full as instalments cannot be made. If the fine is not paid within 28 days the local authority is required to commence prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of poor school attendance. If proven, this could result in a fine of up to £1000 per parent per child or a parenting or community service order.

Please note, if the school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive days; Pupil Entitlement Investigation may consider that a FPN is not appropriate. In these instances the matter may instead be brought directly before the Courts.

The Trust would much rather work with parents/carers to resolve poor attendance than resort to enforcement actions like Fixed Penalty Notices or court.

Appendix 3 Leave of Absence Request form

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM FOR ABSENCE FROM LEARNING TIME

The law states that parents must ensure their children regularly attend school to receive their education. The Department for Education states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short. The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Please note that having already booked a holiday will not be considered as a good reason for term time absence. In relation to 'unavoidable' absence, the Headteacher will consider whether the event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time. Issues of cost will not be considered as an exceptional reason.

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME AND ADDRESS		HOW TO USE THIS FORM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use for all absence other than sickness ▪ Return to school well in advance of the date of requested absence- at least 2 weeks ▪ Use a separate form for each child and each absence
Name of Child:		Class:
Is this the first request for absence this academic year? YES / NO		
Dates requested (from/to):	Date expected back in school:	Number of school days requested:
<p>Reason for request for absence from learning – If you wish for this absence to be authorised, you will need to fully explain why the circumstances of this absence are exceptional and provide any evidence requested by the school. This might include evidence of pre-booked medical procedures, flight details, letters from employers etc (continue overleaf if necessary):-</p>		

I will also be making an Absence Request for children at the following schools (please list the school & names of child/ren)

Signed:

Date:

SCHOOL OFFICE TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION

Last Academic Year Attendance:	%	Green Amber Red	Attendance of 96% is green Attendance of 93-95.9% is amber Attendance less than 93% is red
Current Attendance:	%	Green Amber Red	

HEADTEACHER TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION

Your request is approved

Your request is not approved and is unauthorised

Reason:

Signed:

Date:

**Regular attendance at school is important for your child's education and is a legal requirement.
Responsibility for this rests with the parents.
Only the school, not the parents, can authorise absence.**

