



DALMAIN PRIMARY SCHOOL **ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

All pupils have the right to access full-time education. A good education helps to give children the best possible start in life: there is a clear connection between attendance and achievement. Evidence also suggests that children out of school are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse and more likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour. Regular attendance is essential to enable pupils to take part in all the opportunities available and to develop their full potential. We are committed to working in partnership with our parents/carers who are responsible for ensuring their children access education. Pupils, staff, parents/carers and governors all have some part to play in securing these aims by implementing this policy. This policy provides the framework within which all staff, governors, parents, carers, pupils, and external agencies can contribute to the development and maintenance of high attendance and excellent punctuality.

This policy is based on the DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', August 2024

Roles and Responsibilities

For the School

- To implement a clear system for maintaining full attendance and excellent punctuality that is clearly communicated to all school staff, pupils, governors and parents
- To have an effective and efficient administration system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality
- To offer children and parents/carers support, advice and guidance on the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- To build strong relationships with families and work with them to remove barriers to attendance
- To promote the benefits of excellent attendance throughout the school community

For Pupils

- To attend school every day and on time
- To discuss with their teacher or a trusted adult any problems that may prevent them from doing this
- To support each other in ways that relate to attendance and punctuality

For Parents/Carers

- To ensure their child/children attend every day, on time and prepared for the day
- To support the school in its efforts to improve and maintain attendance and punctuality
- To support the school and their child/children by not removing them from school for holidays or other leave of absence during term-time.
- To minimise the impact of medical, dental and other appointments during the school day

- To follow school procedures for dealing with attendance and punctuality (eg. contacting the school on the first and subsequent days of absence)
- To discuss any concerns or issues which prevent full-time attendance or punctuality with an appropriate member of school staff (eg. Class Teacher, Attendance Officer, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL))

For Teaching Staff

- To be a good role model and collect children from the playground on time at the start of the day and the end of playtimes and lunchtimes
- To take the register at the beginning of every morning and afternoon session in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy
- To inform the DSL or Attendance Officer if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance and punctuality
- To encourage their pupils to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality by discussing the reasons for its importance
- To talk informally to parents/carers about the importance of attendance and punctuality (at Parents' Evenings, for example)
- To be aware that children are not always in control of their attendance and punctuality and to treat them with respect and dignity
- To assist in reintegrating any of their pupils after a period of prolonged absence

For the Attendance Officer (AO) and Administrative Staff

- To carry out first day calling/text messaging and establish reasons for absence and to follow up on extended absences
- To follow the procedures in this policy regarding communication with parents/carers, relevant school staff, the Local Authority and other outside agencies
- To ensure that the school follows the statutory reporting requirements as described in Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024): see Appendix 3.
- To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the school's computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality, for example, processing registers
- To ensure that families with language and communication difficulties are included by providing translations of documents and letters and/or using interpreters
- To prepare and distribute attendance data and reports to staff and SLT on a regular basis
- To liaise with the Headteacher, DSL and other relevant staff and assist in following up poor attendance and punctuality. This may include sending letters regarding poor attendance, organising attendance panel meetings with parents/carer, making home visits, ensuring that pupil attendance targets are agreed and monitored
- To inform the DSL if a child on the safeguarding concern list is absent
- Please note that absence from school may be considered as a safeguarding issue.

For the Headteacher, DSL and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- To co-ordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for maintaining and improving attendance and punctuality throughout the school
- To analyse and act swiftly on identified issues around attendance and punctuality: this will include meetings with parents/carers to discuss strategies for improving attendance and punctuality
- To use ScholarPack to identify groups within the school where attendance and punctuality are below expectations and put appropriate measures in place to address this
- To ensure the learning environment for pupils creates a foundation for excellent attendance and punctuality

- To ensure a wide range of before and after school clubs and activities to encourage attendance and build a sense of community (These currently include Breakfast Club, After-school Club, Sports Clubs and a variety of other staff-led clubs).
- To arrange pastoral support within the school community for children with poor attendance
- To raise the profile of attendance and punctuality throughout the school community: eg. assemblies, ParentMail communications, school newsletter, school website
- To ensure that school expectations in regard to this policy are communicated clearly to all stakeholders
- To collate and report to attendance statistics to Governors

For Governors

- To annually review and agree the Attendance Policy
- To annually agree attendance targets
- To scrutinise attendance data and help school leaders to focus on identified trends and/or individuals
- To take a lead role in supporting the School in the implementation of its approach to attendance and punctuality, especially in response to unauthorised absences
- To ensure school leaders fulfil their statutory duties effectively

Local Authority Attendance and Education Welfare Office (AWO)

- To provide appropriate welfare support to families and schools where there are issues regarding attendance and punctuality

Absences

Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child/children attends the School on a regular and full-time basis. Every full or half-day absence has to be classified by the School as either authorised or unauthorised (see below). The school has a legal duty to publish children's attendance records on their school report. Parents/carers are not expected to take children out of school during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school by 9.00 am on the first day of a child's absence. If this does not occur, the Attendance Officer (AO) will contact the parents/carers to establish the reason for absence and the expected length of absence. The AO may also contact any additional contacts on the child's records.

If no contact is made or received on the first or second day, the AO (with another member of staff) will conduct a home visit on the third day of absence to attempt to contact the family and check on the welfare of the child. If there are already safeguarding concerns regarding the child, this visit may take place on the second day of absence: the DSL (and a social worker if deemed necessary) will accompany the AO. The DSL and Headteacher will be informed of the outcome of home visits and will take appropriate action. This may include further home visits, contacting the AWO, involvement with early support agencies (such as MASH) or social care professionals, up to and including informing the police.

Persistent absences and/or lateness

The AO and DSL will liaise in the identification of persistent absence and/or lateness, and will work with the family, the SLT, the Class Teacher, other staff members and any relevant external agencies, including the AWO, to attempt to resolve any underlying issues that may be affecting the child's attendance and punctuality.

Reporting a child Missing from Education

The school must report a child to the local authority's Missing from Education team following ten consecutive days of unexplained absence and all checks have been exhausted: eg. telephone calls and emails to all known numbers on the school systems, including relatives where known, checks with friends in and out of the school, additional home visits.

Deletions from the Register/Removal from the School Roll

Parents must ensure they inform the school of any change of address, contact details or family circumstances. Should a parent advise they are moving and will be removing their child(ren) from the school roll, the school must attempt to obtain the parent's new address and if possible the name of new school the child will be attending. If this information has not been supplied the school must inform their AWO if the child leaves without obtaining any forwarding information. In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, children will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- The child/children have transferred to another school
- The child/children have withdrawn to be educated outside the school system (Educated otherwise)
- The child/children fail to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child
- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the child
- The child has left the school but it is not known where he or she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the child

Interventions

When the need for an attendance intervention is identified, the school will implement a variety of strategies to improve attendance. These are developed in conjunction with:

- Children and families
- Specialist staff (eg. SENDCo, DSL,)
- Outside agencies (eg. Lewisham AWO, Drumbeat)

These strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Offering use of Breakfast Club.
- Referral to Early Help.
- Supporting families with home visual timetables.

The school monitors the effectiveness of these strategies (via ScholarPack and in liaison with Class Teachers) and will adjust them as appropriate depending on their success or otherwise.

Each child is an individual, so our strategies vary depending on the needs of the child and/or the family.

Should school-based interventions not prove effective, the school will make a referral for statutory intervention to the Local Authority.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Absences are authorised when a parent/carer gives a valid and acceptable reason, either by letter, email or verbally.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – the school may request that evidence of appointment/s is/are provided. The school also requests that such appointments are made out of school hours or during the holidays whenever possible.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
- Traveller children 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;

The Head Teacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term-time in other circumstances, unless they consider them to be 'exceptional'.

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

The school will also take into account the child's attendance record / attainment / previous record of requesting time off in term time, and will then issue a letter to the parent/carer stating whether or not the absence has been authorised.

An authorised leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

If a parent/carer needs to request absence during term time, they should collect an Absence Request form from the office (or school website) and return it to the Headteacher in plenty of time before the requested absence.

For reference purposes, an entry is made on ScholarPack of all absences, whether authorised or unauthorised.

If a parent/carer requests absence during term time which is not authorised, and they persist in taking their child out of school, the Local Authority may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. In these cases, the parent/carer will need to pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

Illness

If a child is absent because of illness, the parent/carer should contact the school by 9am on the first day of absence to explain the reason for absence, and then on each subsequent day of absence.

By the third day of absence the school will require parents/carers to provide proof of illness (prescriptions, appointments etc.). However, individual family circumstances may mean that this stipulation cannot be adhered to, in which case the School Attendance Officer will, in consultation with the Headteacher and the family concerned, exercise their discretion in regarding absences as either authorised or unauthorised (this will also apply in regard to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices).

Pupils with Medical Needs / Absence on Medical Grounds

Any concerns about a pupil's attendance or absence through ill health, whether physical or mental (anxiety, for example), should be reported to the Attendance Officer and the DSL, who are responsible for monitoring pupil attendance in the school.

The LA's Attendance & Welfare Officer (AWO) should keep in regular contact with the parent/carers of pupils who are absent on a regular basis or for extended periods.

The name of a pupil with medical needs remains on the school roll. Where the pupil receives education from an alternative provider, the absence will be recorded as *an approved educational activity* in the school register;

The school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is responsible for pupils with medical needs. They will:

1. makes arrangements for collecting work from class teachers, ensures it reaches the pupil and that it is marked on return
2. liaises with the home, health professionals, the AWO, home tuition service or special school as necessary
3. where it is apparent that a pupil will be absent for more than 15 days, ensures an Individual Education Plan is drawn up in consultation with the appropriate service, setting out how the pupil's needs will be met in a planned way
4. ensures effective reintegration arrangements are in place for when a pupil is well enough to return to school

Class teachers must provide work so it reaches the pupil within 5 days of absence.

When a pupil is absent for 5 days or more

The Attendance Officer will:

- Make arrangements for sending work home, collecting it from class teachers, ensuring it reaches the pupil and that it is marked on return. Where the pupil has access to a computer in the home, ICT may be used
- Consider any support from other agencies that the pupil may need
- Ensure effective reintegration arrangements are in place to ease the pupil's return to school

When a pupil is absent for 15 days or more, or has a recurrent illness

When a pupil has been absent for 15 days, or it is known at an early stage they will be absent for at least 15 days, or the pupil has a recurrent illness which requires periods of absence from school, the SENCo will:

- Inform the parent/carers of the support that the school can provide and that offered by the LA through a named special school;
- Inform the LA officer responsible for provision, using the agreed Lewisham referral procedure;
- Arrange a meeting which includes the parent/carer/carer, the pupil (if possible), health professional, representative from Dalmain Primary school, and any other relevant person supporting the pupil (e.g. AWO);
- Record agreed action in a personal care plan which contains arrangements for
 - providing education during the period of absence, including access to examinations, the provision of work and the monitoring of pupil progress
 - pastoral support and maintaining contact with peers
 - meeting medical needs
 - reintegration, which may initially be part-time and require additional support
 - taking account of the pupil's views.
- Ensure that the personal care plan is reviewed at least once a term. If a pupil has a statement of special educational needs, they will still receive a full annual review in addition to review of their personal care plan.

Any child with a specific mental health, medical, mobility or behavioural issue will have appropriate support and strategies put in place to overcome barriers to attendance.

Liaison with the LA's Attendance & Welfare Office (AWO)

The Attendance Officer will liaise with the AWO on a half-termly basis.

Absence data will be provided to the AWO for children who have been absent persistently during the half term together with the under 90% details. The data will be analysed and any recommendations will be noted. The AWO and Attendance Officer will decide if any referrals should be made to Lewisham.

Registration

A child is deemed to be late when they arrive more than 15 minutes after their scheduled start time, as per the most recent communication with parents/carers.

Children come into school from 08.45 and morning registration is at 09.00. Afternoon registration is at 12.45 in Key Stage 1 and 13.45 in Key Stage 2.

Class teachers should enter registration information directly onto the school management information system (MIS) at 09.00 and at 12.45 (Key Stage 1) or 13.45 (Key Stage 2). See **Appendix 1**.

Latecomers

Children who arrive late (after 9am and before 9.30am) should sign in on the Inventory signing in system and a Late Card is issued to the child to hand to their teacher. The attendance register on the MIS is then amended accordingly by the Attendance Officer to ensure their attendance is recorded correctly.

If a valid reason is given for the lateness the child is marked with an L and the reason is entered in the comments field. If the child arrives after 09.30am then a U will be shown and this will be classed as an unauthorised absence from school. (In the afternoon, KS1 registers are closed at 13.15 and KS2 registers at 13.45, after which time children are marked as U.)

When a child has been late for school on three or more occasions in a half term, a letter is sent informing parent/carers of our concerns.

Late Leavers

Children who are not collected by 3.25pm are entered into the PM Late Book and are required to wait at the Reception desk where they are monitored by a member of staff. Parents/carers are telephoned to establish the reason why they are late. When the parent/carer arrives, he/she signs in the book and enters the time that the child was collected.

If a child remains at school for more than 45 minutes after the end of the school day, and we are unable to contact their parent/carer, it becomes a child protection issue and Social Services may be informed.

Late collection times are entered onto the MIS on a weekly basis. When a child has been collected late on more than three occasions in a half term period, a letter is sent informing parent/carers of our concerns.

Procedures for Leaving School Early

If a parent/carer collects a child before the end of the school session, this must be authorised by the Head, Assistant Head(s), or Behaviour & Safeguarding Lead. The time of leaving must be entered in the register. If children leave school for an appointment, medical evidence should be provided i.e appointment letter or appointment card. Their times of departure and return are noted.

Targets

The school's attendance target is reviewed annually and set by the Governors in agreement with the Local Authority. The target for 2024-25 is 97%.

Approval Level:	Full Governing Body
Signed by Chair of Governors (Catriona Scott):	<i>Catriona Scott</i>
Date approved:	October 2024
Next review date:	October 2025
Author:	Erika Eisele/Peter Clarke
Implementation date:	December 2020
Version:	003

HISTORY		
Policy review date	Reason for review	Description
September 2021	Annual review	No changes made
September 2022	Annual review	Various changes to reflect updates and changes in systems and procedures

September 2023	Annual review	Changes made to authorised/unauthorised section in line with updated guidance
October 2024	Annual review	Updated in line with statutory data sharing requirements. Additional detail added to and clarification of roles and responsibilities.

Appendix 1



DINNER / ATTENDANCE REGISTERS

Registers

Registers should be taken at 9am and at the start of the afternoon session (1pm for EYFS and KS1, 1.30pm for KS2).

To complete the morning register:

- Click on the **ScholarPack** icon on your desktop.
- Enter your username and password (case sensitive) then click on login.
- Click on Home then Register.
- Select your form (class) from the drop down list, then click View
- Children will all be marked as present as the default. Call out children's names and change the default option to 'Absent' for any child that is absent. Check the meal option against the default for each child.
- Each child will call out his/her dinner option (school dinner/packed lunch) which should tally with what you see on the screen. If for any reason a child has a dinner option which differs from his/her default option please send them straight to the school office.
- Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Submit Register.

To complete the afternoon register:

- Children will all be marked as present as the default. Call out children's names and change the default option to 'Absent' for any child that is absent. ***If there are any changes from the morning register, you must notify the school office immediately.***
- Click on Submit Register.

Once you have submitted your register it will input on to the office's computerised system which records attendance.

If you need to make changes to either the AM or PM register, please notify the school office.

Absence

If you receive a letter explaining the reason for a child's absence, please send it directly to the school office.

Late children

If a child arrives late please ensure that they have collected a Late Card from the office, which shows that they have signed in late. If a child arrives in class without a Late Card they **must return to Reception** to be registered and given a Late Card.

Please return the Late Cards to the office by the end of the school day.

If there is no mark on the register, they will be marked as absent. This affects their attendance record and also means that they may not receive a lunch.

Dinner money & other payments

All payments are made via Parent Mail or the school card-reader. Cash payments will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 2



ATTENDANCE REGISTER CODES

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) (L)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (C)
E	Excluded (E)
H	Holiday agreed (H)
I	Illness NOT appointments (I)
M	Appointments (M)
R	Religious observance (R)
S	Study leave (S)
T	Traveller Absence (T)
B	Off site Ed. not dual (B)
J	Interview (J)
P	Sports (P)
V	Visit or trip (V)
W	Work experience (W)
G	Holiday NOT agreed (G)
N	No reason (N)
O	Unauthorised absence (O)
U	Late (after registers) (U)
D	Dual registration (D)
Y	Absent due to exceptional circumstances (Y)
#	School Closed to all Pupils (#)
Z	Pupil not on roll
X	For Early Years (X)

Colour	Description
Green	Present
Yellow	Authorised Absence
Orange	Approved Educational Activity - Counted as Present
Pink	Unauthorised Absence
White	Not Counted In Attendance Calculations

Appendix 3

The statutory guidance Working together to Improve School Attendance states that schools of all types should share attendance data with the local authority and Department for Education (DfE). From the 19th of August 2024, this requirement will be mandated in law.

All schools in Lewisham should now be sharing daily attendance data via Studybugs and WONDE in accordance with national guidelines.

In addition to daily attendance data, new data sharing regulations now require specific data to be shared with the local authority. These are outlined below and must be reported by all schools and academies.

As a minimum this includes:

New Pupil and Deletion returns: schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times. This is an existing requirement. For full details see paragraphs 199 and 205 of the statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#). **Please note these returns must be made to the Lewisham admission service- not the attendance service.**

Attendance returns: all schools should provide the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). - **please note** only pupils who have the absence codes listed above should be included in the return. This request does not require schools to send the LA a list of every persistently absent pupil (under 90%) only pupils who have had continuous absence for 10 school days. This means schools do not include pupils where absence has been authorised by the school. Schools should make a return to the attendance service **each calendar month**

Sickness returns: all schools should provide the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness- please note this only requires a list of pupils who have been absent for sickness and the school have recorded Code I. It does not require schools to send the LA a list of pupils who have been absent for 15 days (consecutive or cumulatively) and other absence codes have been used. For cumulative absences, schools should make a return to the attendance service **each calendar month**. However only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

Children missing out on education: in accordance with the local authority safeguarding responsibility schools must inform the attendance service when a pupil has a reduced education plan in place by completing a half termly data return. Please see the list of scheduled submission dates on the **Reduced Education Plan** page on this website.

Schools should diarise the data returns within their internal planning. This will help ensure the returns become routine from the start of the academic year.

To make a data return, schools must download a copy of the returns forms. Returns should be submitted to the attendance service aws@lewisham.gov.uk with the name of the data return in the subject header within the timeframes outlined above.