

Durston House

Attendance Policy

Aims of the Policy

Durston House is committed to meet its 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). The policy aims to:

- set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, reduce absence and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance
- to recognise the linkages to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding
- to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection

Scope and Application

This policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS. It is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence. It complements all relevant policies and procedures found on DurstonNet, including the Pastoral Care, Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and Parent Contract.

Introduction

Durston House School aims to work together with parents/guardians to ensure that all children registered at our school attend every day and on time unless absence is unavoidable e.g. chronic health issues, exceptional circumstances. Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it, the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; put simply: absence means missed learning and potentially reduced attainment. It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age (term after child turns five) receive full time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence and irregular attendance leads to pupils missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential. Absence can also place children at risk and may result in them being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

School Responsibilities

- Durston House acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the school community.
- It consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.
- Where there are challenges to attendance, we will work effectively and respectfully with pupils and their families.
- The school will respond to non-attendance and/or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding

and behaviour policies and the school's terms and conditions. There will be robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent.

Staff Responsibilities

The Headmaster appoints a member of staff of the School's Management Team as a Designated Senior Lead for Attendance (DSLAs) to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. The DSLA's responsibilities include:

- Formulating a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations
- Having an oversight of and analysis of attendance data
- Communicating clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents

The School ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it. The registers are accurately completed and effective procedures are in place to follow-up absence.

Pupil Responsibilities

- Pupils are responsible for attending all classes and activities punctually.
- If absent, teachers should ensure that pupils are completing any missed assignments or assessments promptly.
- Pupils should inform their teachers and obtain missed assignments immediately upon return to school.
- Persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the school. This may take the form of communication with parents and/or sanctions.
- If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff or their Form Tutor.
- If a pupil has a disability that affects their ability to attend school regularly, reasonable adjustments will be made. Suitable strategies will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.
- Parents should make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity.
- They should notify the school by phone or email on the first day of pupil's absence before 9:30 a.m.), and each subsequent day of absence, in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for the absence.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to schedule medical and dental appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

Attendance Expectations

- Pupils are expected to attend all scheduled classes, activities, and events unless excused for valid reasons.
- Punctuality is important; pupils should arrive on time for all classes and activities.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

- **Excused Absences:** Absences will be considered excused for reasons such as illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, and religious observances. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to notify the school in advance or as soon as possible regarding the reason for the absence.
- **Unexcused Absences:** Absences without a valid reason approved by the school will be considered unexcused.

Consequences of Absences

- Excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, may impact a pupil's academic progress and may result in additional academic support requirements.
- Parents of pupils with chronic absenteeism may be subject to a meeting with the Deputy Head and a formal attendance review.
- The school reserves the right to request a medical note or other documentation for extended absences.

Recording Attendance

Durston House maintains an electronic attendance register for all pupils. Attendance is recorded at the start of each school day at 8.25 a.m. on Engage.

Any changes to the attendance register will include the original and amended entries, reason for the amendment, date of the change, and the person responsible. Attendance records are kept for six years from the date of entry.

School Initiatives

Durston House will monitor attendance regularly and communicate with parents/guardians regarding any concerns. The school will provide support and resources to help pupils maintain good attendance habits.

Evaluation of this Policy

This policy will be evaluated annually by the school, amended where necessary and approved by SMT.

<i>Created</i>	<i>August 2024</i>	<i>JMT</i>	<i>Version 1</i>
<i>Approved</i>	<i>30 August 2024</i>	<i>SMT</i>	<i>Version 1</i>