



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Version			
Date	Document Version	Document Revision History	Document Author/Reviser
14.4.16	1.0	Update of all policies for Trust Schools	A White
16.4.18	1.1	Update to include latest practice. Approval to be sought at LGB 15.5.18	A White

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months in light of local and Government legislation.

The Dunham Trust believes it makes a significant contribution in transforming children's life chances. Our aim and commitment is to transform schools into sustainable learning academy communities.

"We aim to ensure that, for everyone involved, excellence and equity become and remain a reality"

"They come this way only once so we should litter their pathways with quality experiences"

We believe that we are able to help our academies and their young people to aspire to and achieve success. To do this, we are committed to ensuring that every child and young person has a pathway to succeed that:

- gives the best possible start in life
- equips with creativity, spirit and confidence
- enables individuals to appreciate life and equip for further learning
- supports the child in becoming a responsible citizen
- ensures continued success in his/her future and contributes to the local community

Our aims for 'Improvement' are designed to ensure all academies are consistently benchmarked against key improvement priorities. This framework will ensure effective progress across the Trust, whilst at the same time, leaving space for autonomy at the school level. It will:

- focus efforts on what really matters, i.e. our vision, principles and commitment to the children, young people, families and communities that we serve.
- provide a flexible approach to improvement that meets the needs of each Academy. This will involve a commitment to immediate improvement in each individual context, professional development and a collaborative approach that engages with improvement projects designed to build capacity, an approach that is responsive, reflective and sustainable.
- focus on outcomes, understanding that these are not negotiable. We are committed to a no-excuses culture. In achieving these outcomes, all will focus on individual responsibility and collective accountability for success

The Trust has a responsibility to ensure the success of each academy by allowing every pupil to maximise his/her potential. As an academy sponsor there will be an expectation for joint working across individual academies. The Trust is committed to high quality academy improvement activity, networking and development and research. Equally, the promotion of sport, outdoor education and the creative arts will be important in the development of pupil self-esteem and building learning skills.

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, gender, religion, ability and any special needs s/he may have.

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. The Dunham Trust takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all of its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school. This policy has been developed in consultation with Governors, Teachers, Pupils, Parents and Carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' successes and achievements
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

Statements of expectations;

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

What is expected of pupils:

- ◆ To respect themselves and others
- ◆ To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- ◆ To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
- ◆ To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- ◆ To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children. If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school and social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

What is expected of Parents:

- ◆ To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- ◆ To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- ◆ To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- ◆ To work closely with the school to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance

- ◆ To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special / exceptional circumstances.
- ◆ To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATs or the numeracy and literacy hour
- ◆ To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

The Dunham Trust will endeavor to provide an environment within its schools that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. Each school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken twice each day, once at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

What is expected of each School within The Dunham Trust:

- ◆ To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- ◆ To meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- ◆ To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- ◆ To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- ◆ To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 education act using digital registering systems as appropriate
- ◆ To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- ◆ To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- ◆ To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- ◆ To develop attendance targets for each school year based on previous attendance and national averages
- ◆ To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. The Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The LEA as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

The Law

By law, parents are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly. Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or has a day of religious observance.

Arrival and registration

All children should be in the playground ready to come into school between 10 and 5 minutes before the official start of the school day. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.

The official start of the school day is 8.55 am and doors are secured at this time. Morning registration takes place at 8.55 am. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked in as Late. After 9.30 am this will become an Unauthorised Absence unless an adequate reason is given e.g. medical appointment.

The afternoon register is taken at the start of the afternoon teaching session. It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the school office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers.

Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officer for each school within The Dunham trust to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences. Each school's Attendance Officer will liaise with the EWO and families. The EWO will make home visits if appropriate. Regular meetings take place between the Attendance officer and the EWO.

Illness and medical appointments:

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

Absence

The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence. Parents should inform school by phone or letter/email on the first day of absence unless unexpected circumstances mean this information can only arrive in school after the absence. The absence note/email needs to be dated.

Regulations

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995
Section 8(1) "Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school"
Section 8(3) of this act gives the school discretionary powers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of annual holiday during term time.
Holidays in term time will not be authorised by schools.

Leave of Absence

Parents may apply for leave from school for their child under 'exceptional circumstances'. To do this they should apply directly to the relevant Head of School who may authorise the absence if it fits within the 'exceptional circumstances' remit. A form on the school website is provided for this purpose.

Leave of absence for pupils will never be authorised during National Testing dates.

Work will not be set for completion during leave of absence granted under 'exceptional circumstances', but children should be encouraged to read and keep a diary of their experiences.

Unauthorised Absence

Parents who decide to take a holiday without permission, will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer, and could result in a fine or court action. The government classes an attendance figure of under 90% as 'persistent absence' and any such pupils will be carefully monitored. School is able to apply to the court for a fixed penalty notice to be given for 10 or more unauthorised absence sessions in a term. One school day counts as 2 sessions; morning and afternoon. When considering the application of a fixed term penalty notice school will look at the child's overall attendance (is this less than 90%?) and also consider any factors which may have contributed to the 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence.

Arrangements for absence in other circumstances

Family bereavement and exceptional circumstances:
Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

Early Identification

If a class teacher has particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the Head of School will be informed. The school attendance officer will also inform the Head of school of any child whose attendance has dropped below the 90% level.

Home School Partnership

The Dunham Trust will continue to fulfil its legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All staff working within The Dunham Trust is committed to working with all parents and children to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Monitoring and review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Heads of School, who will make an annual report to the Local Governing Body of that school.

Approval by The Dunham Trust

Signed: _____
Date: _____
Review date: _____

This policy, signed by a Director on behalf of the Dunham Trust, is held centrally on the One Drive.

End of policy statement