

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Updated January 2016

## 1. Introduction

- Regular school attendance is **essential** if children are to achieve their full potential at Deeping St Nicholas.
- We value all pupils and we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them enabling them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent individuals who are able to make a positive contribution to their community.
- We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and admission. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

## 2. Legal Framework

- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### Categorising absence

- Where pupils are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an explanation of the nature of the absence and an expected date of return.
- Where a parent does not phone in, the School Secretary will phone to check why the child is absent. A record will be made stating that the school had to contact home and record the reasons given for absence.

### Absence will be categorised as follows:

#### **Illness**

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. but consent to contact the GP may also be requested.

#### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments **outside of the school day**. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day.

### **Other Authorised Circumstances**

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement.

### **Excluded (No alternative provision made)**

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

### **Leave of absence**

**Parents are advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time.** Leave of absence **may be granted but only** in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher and Governing Body. Parents wishing to take their child on a leave of absence during term time must send a written request to the head teacher before arrangements are made. If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on leave, the absence will be **unauthorised** and this may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, if the parent pays this within 21 days from the date it is served the sum dues is £60, if the parent fails to pay after 21 days the amount increased to £120 this must be paid before 28 days have passed from the date of service. If the parent fails to pay then consideration will be given to issuing criminal proceeding against the parent in the magistrate's court for the non-attendance of their child.

### **Religious Observance**

We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Parents must give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

### **Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School will follow County guidance in relation to Traveller absence.

### **Late Arrival**

Registration begins at 8.45 a.m, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L code). The register will close at 9:15 a.m. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as unauthorised late (U code), this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session. Arriving late is a disadvantage as pupils are unsettled when classroom routines/ lessons have already commenced and should therefore be avoided. Persistent lateness may result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Service and a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Absence will not be authorised unless a satisfactory explanation has been given which has been accepted as such by the school. **If after 2 weeks no satisfactory explanation has been given for the absence it will be coded as unauthorised.**

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken (unless for exceptional circumstances)

A child will be classed as a persistent absentee if their attendance (either authorised or unauthorised) falls below 85% in any academic year.

### Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended leave of absence and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil

We will follow Lincolnshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown. In line with safeguarding procedure where school has received no notification as to the whereabouts of the child for a period of 5 school days, the school will report the absence to the Local Authority.

### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

#### The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school. This year's targets are to reduce the level of persistent absenteeism and overall absence to be below 4.0%
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings. The Governor responsible for questioning and monitoring attendance data is **Mrs Sarah Sharma**
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance. At Deeping St Nicholas this is **Mrs Anita Bandey** (Headteacher)
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence and also to determine whether particular groups may be disadvantaged and require specifically targeted support
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is evaluated and reviewed annually with the support of the Headteacher. Evidence of evaluation is discussed at meetings of the Full Governing Body.
- Evaluate the attendance reward strategies through pupil interviews.

**The Headteacher will:**

- Ensure that there is a named senior manager (**Mrs Anita Bandey**) to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and strategies
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families, this may include Early Help Assessments or the Team Around the Child process.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.

**The Administrator will**

- Make calls to parents on the first day of absence
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Provide the Headteacher with attendance data and this will be fed back to Governors at each Full Governors meeting.
- Communicate attendance data for their child in writing with parents at the end of each term (6 x annually); raising awareness that this may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Staff will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented

**Parents will:**

- Adhere to the legal responsibilities of a parent in ensuring their child's attendance in school is regular and punctual
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with medical evidence if requested.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- **Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.**

**Pupils will:**

- Be expected to attend school every day and be on time unless they are too ill to attend
- Speak to a member of staff if they have any issues which are resulting in poor attendance.

**6. RESPONDING TO NON – ATTENDANCE**

When a pupil does not attend the school will respond in the following ways:

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by text and/or telephone
- Where there is no response, the school will contact other numbers on the contact list for reassurance that the child is safe
- If a pupil has irregular attendance, the school will send a letter of concern
- If there is no improvement in attendance following the issue of the first letter, the school will invite parents into school to discuss any problems that may prevent regular attendance
- If there is no improvement in attendance the parents will be invited to attend a School Attendance Panel Meeting in school. The panel will include appropriate school staff, parents and possibly the Education Welfare Officer, depending on individual circumstances. This meeting aims to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the children from attending school.
- If there continues to be no improvement then the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer with a view to a formal referral being made to the Education Welfare Service if one has not already been made at an earlier stage. If a referral has already been made then the case will be reviewed and the meeting used to plan further action.
- When a pupil is returning to school following a long – term absence it may be appropriate to establish a care plan
- Designated staff will be responsible for deciding on the plan for return and the management of that plan
- All staff will need to be aware of the difficulty within this process and be sensitive to the careful handling that the plan may require
- Support plans may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part time attendance with support from the SENCo

**Support Systems**

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

Staff will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels with subsequent recorded action plans
- Referrals to support agencies
- Reward systems (such as termly certificates, badges, wristbands etc. and an end of year 100% attendance trophy)
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

In accordance with the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) and the Human Rights Act (1998) the school will provide information that is accessible, including translation and interpretation, when deemed necessary.



Appendix 1 – Letter 1

<Date >

<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>

Re: Name of pupil dob

Dear <Name of Parent>

In accordance with our procedure to improve attendance and achievement, I am writing to you because your child's attendance has fallen to ...%. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

An attendance of less than 85% means an average of at least one day off every week and this will harm your child's future if it is not improved. I realise that there may be good reason for your child's recent absence and you may have already told us about it. However, it is vital that all pupils at our school attend at least 95% of the time and therefore we will be monitoring your child's attendance.

With your support, I would expect your child's attendance to improve. If it does not, you will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss your child's attendance and any support the school can give.

I would like to remind you that parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure their children receive an adequate education under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

If you have any concerns or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

I look forward to seeing an improvement in ..... 's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Anita Bandey

Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

Appendix 2 – Letter 2

<Date >

<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>

Re: Name of pupil dob

Dear <Name of Parent>

On <date> I wrote to you advising that .....’s attendance had fallen to ...%. Unfortunately, there has been no significant improvement in his/her attendance and this is continuing to cause concern. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

I must remind you that regular attendance is a legal requirement and it is important that any issues that may be the cause of this poor attendance are addressed as soon as possible. You are invited to attend a meeting at school with the Headteacher on <date> at <time> to discuss your child’s attendance and offer our support in improving this.

If you are unable to attend on this date please contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Please complete the reply slip below to confirm you will be attending this meeting.

Yours sincerely

Anita Bandey

Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

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**Attendance Meeting <date>**

Child’s Name:.....

I will/will not be able to attend the attendance meeting on <date>

Signature:.....

Appendix 3 – Letter 3

<Date >

<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>

Re: Name of pupil dob

Dear <Name of Parent>

Following our meeting on <date>, I note that there has been no significant improvement in <pupil's name>'s attendance. <Pupil's name>'s attendance for this academic year has fallen to...%. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

You are invited to attend a School Attendance Panel meeting on <date> to discuss the concerns around his/her attendance. The school's Education Welfare Officer, Helen Terrington, will also be present at the meeting.

We need to draw your attention to the fact that parents have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly, unless they are unable to do so by reasons of ill health or any other legally acceptable reason.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the school to rearrange. Should you subsequently not arrive for the meeting it will go ahead as planned and a copy of the action plan will be sent to you.

Please complete the reply slip below to confirm you will be attending.

Yours sincerely

Anita Bandey  
Headteacher

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School Attendance Panel Meeting <date>

Child's Name:.....

I will/will not be able to attend the attendance meeting on <date>

Signature:.....

Appendix 4 – Letter 4

<Date >

<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>

Re: Name of pupil dob

Dear <Name of Parent>

Following our School Attendance Panel meeting on <date>, I note that there has been no significant improvement in <pupil's name>'s attendance. <Pupil's name>'s attendance for this academic year has fallen to...%. A copy of the attendance record is enclosed.

It has now become necessary to refer <Pupil's name> and the concerns around his/her attendance to the school's Education Welfare Officer, Helen Terrington. She will contact you in due course.

Should you have anything you wish to discuss concerning this matter, I will continue to be available. Please contact the school should you require an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Anita Bandey  
Headteacher

Appendix 5 - Lateness

<Date >

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Name of Parent>

Our attendance records show that <name of child> has been late on <number of lates> occasions since the start of this term.

We are sure you will understand lateness can be very disruptive to the school day. Missing the start of lessons means instructions and other essential information will have to be repeated, which will delay the start of lessons and young people's learning.

The school day starts at 8:45 a.m. and register closes at 9:15a.m. Late arrival after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence.

If you are having problems getting your child to school, please do not hesitate to contact us to see how we can work together to resolve the situation.

I look forward to seeing an improvement in <name of child>'s punctuality.

Yours sincerely

Anita Bandey  
Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

Appendix 6 – Absence

<Date >

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Name of Parent>

Our records show <name of pupil> was not at school on the date/s listed below. Currently, we do not have any explanation for this absence. If you have already sent a note, please make sure <name of pupil> has given it to their class teacher. If no note is received, this absence will be coded as unauthorised and this will remain on your child's attendance record.

We ask that parents/carers contact the school on the first day of a child's absence. The telephone number for the school is: 01775 630280

Beside the dates below please enter the reason <name of pupil> was absent. If you were unaware of the absence enter a question mark:

<Date>:

<Date>:

<Date>:

<Date>:

Signed Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this letter to the school office.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Anita Bandey  
Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

Appendix 7 – Doctor’s Note

<Date >

<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>  
<Address>

Dear <Name of Parent>

Since the start of the school year <name of pupil> has been absent from school for <number of days> days due to illness. This is concerning as it means <name of pupil>’s attendance overall is <percentage absence>, which is significantly below what the school expects. We understand that some absence due to illness is unavoidable. However it is important the school are aware of any on-going health problems so we can put the correct support in place.

We are sure that you are aware that every school day counts and missing any time from school results in lost learning. We want to support <name of pupil> and make certain that <he/she> does not get behind with work or miss out on any opportunities school offers.

Due to the large amount of illness absence <name of pupil> has had, we will require a doctor’s note or appointment card for any future periods of absence relating to illness.

We will continue to monitor <name of pupils> attendance. If you wish to discuss <name of pupil> attendance with us please contact the school on 01775 630280. I will be happy to talk with you or arrange a meeting if required.

Yours sincerely

Anita Bandey  
Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

Appendix 8 – Fixed Penalty Notice

<Date >

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Name of Parent>

**FIXED PENALTY FORMAL WARNING – HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

**NAME OF CHILD/YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**PUPIL REGISTERED AT:**

This letter is a Fixed Penalty Formal Warning and is being sent to you because you have requested a period of absence from school for your child during term time. Holiday during term time will only be authorised if it is deemed by the Headteacher to be exceptional circumstances. Your request for holiday from <date> to <date> , has not been deemed to be exceptional circumstances and therefore will be coded as unauthorised absence if this holiday should go ahead.

If you choose to ignore this warning and go ahead with the holiday during term time, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority for the above period of absence under the following legislation:

1. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
2. Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act
3. In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the school on 01775 630280 or the Local Authority Education Welfare Office 01775 766151.

Yours sincerely

Anita Bandey  
Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

# Deeping St Nicholas Primary School



## APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As a parent or carer you should avoid booking holidays or visits overseas during term-time. Full school attendance is VITAL for your child's educational progress.

Parents are reminded that they **do not** have any entitlement to term-time leave for their children. At Deeping St Nicholas, we will not agree to authorise leave during term-time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** which warrant this **at the discretion of the headteacher**. Requests for absence must be received at least **four weeks** in advance of the requested absence otherwise it will be unauthorised automatically . Permission will not be given if it is applied for after the leave has been taken place.

Should leave be taken after permission has been withheld then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This will appear both in the school register and in your child's report.

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% within any 6 week period) may result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer and possible legal proceedings including the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 if paid in 21 days or £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days per child per parent if the Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days consideration will be given to legal proceedings.

I request that \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child)  
be granted leave of absence from Deeping St Nicholas Primary School  
from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Total number of days \_\_\_\_\_

It is necessary to take my child out of school because (the information must be specific and explain in FULL detail, evidence regarding the absence may be required as part of the application process) :

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Carer (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

Request granted \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher Date \_\_\_\_\_

Request refused \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for refusal \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. Full details are required why you have requested leave of absence from school
2. If request made in connection to a family member, it must be clear what the relationship is to the child and why the child needs to be present.
3. We will automatic expect evidence to be provided if child/ren do not return on the expected date (including medical evidence, receipts, aircraft tickets, Employers letters etc.)
4. If absence is required due to employment restriction a letter from Employer (must be on headed paper) will be required explaining why leave is being taken in term time.
5. Additional proof of absence may be requested to support application request. If information is not forthcoming within 5 days of receipt of original application, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.