



DEDWORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



We take absence very seriously at DMS and will keep you informed about your child's attendance percentage if this causes concern. The minimum target for all children is 96%, although of course we would prefer no absence at all. To maintain good attendance, a child would need to have less than ten days of absence in any school year. This includes any days off sick, lateness and medical appointments.

Why is regular attendance important?

- The more they are here, the more they can learn.
- Good attitudes to school attendance and punctuality will set firm foundations for your child in the future.
- Absence can damage confidence. If a child is away from school, they can easily fall behind with their learning. Not only do they miss the work during their absence, but when they return the class has moved on. This time of not knowing what they've missed can set them even further back and it can take more time for them to regain their confidence. In some cases, this could even cause anxiety. This is the case in the younger year groups.
- Poor attendance has a large impact on progress in all subjects, for example in science we cover two different units in a term so a missed lesson would leave a gap in knowledge, and more than one missed lesson would put the student at a significant disadvantage. Much of the work done at key stage 3 is built upon at GCSE and having those gaps in knowledge now would not only affect transfer exams but would have a direct effect on GCSE results.

Reporting absences

- Any absences must be reported before 9am each morning using the free messaging service in the School Gateway app
- We use a 'daily calling system' to safeguard children. If your child is absent and we have not received notification from you, a call home will be made around 11am. This helps us to ensure our pupils are safe. If there is no response at home, the Attendance Officer will refer to the DCPO (Designated Child Protection Officer).
- Please note that we do require a doctor's note on the 5th day stating the reason and that the child is too ill to attend school. This can be in the form of a handwritten note in the pupil's planner with a surgery stamp or a phone call to the Attendance officer from the surgery.

Arriving late to school

- Children can arrive at school from 8.00am when the gates are opened. There is a breakfast club which operates from 8.00am. All children should be in school no later than 8.45am and children should be settled in class and ready for their register no later than 8.50am. Any child arriving after registration will be marked as late.
- If children arrive at school after the gates have closed their parents must sign them in at the school office. If registers have already closed when they arrive at class, this will be counted as a half day absence and it will be marked as unauthorised.
- Continual unauthorised lateness will draw the attention of the Educational Welfare Officer when they do their regular register checks and could result in further action being taken.

Authorised Absence

A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher. The school will accept the following as reasons for authorised absence:

- the child is too ill to attend. In cases of recurring absences through illness parents may be asked to produce a medical certificate;
- where the pupil has an emergency dental/medical appointment. (Routine appointments should be made after school or during the holidays) Parents should return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand;
- participation in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;

Frequently asked questions

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What can I do to help my child's attendance?

There are several things you can do to keep your child's attendance high:

- Make sure your child knows the importance of regular school attendance. Your own attitude to school is **vital**. If you place great importance on attendance and punctuality, your child will do the same.
- All children have their moments of not wanting to go to school. But if your child begins to show unusual reluctance to come to school, contact your child's tutor as soon as possible to discuss this. Encourage your child to speak to their tutor about any issues they might be having, academic, social, or emotional.
- Make any medical or dental appointments outside school hours or in the school holidays where possible. If this is not possible, we would urge you to bring your child to school for their register mark in the morning, then take them to their appointment later, ensuring they are back in school for 2pm registration.
- Make sure your child only misses school if it is absolutely necessary. Remember that your child must never miss school for birthdays, visiting relatives, holidays, or because of siblings being unwell.

If your child has issues with attendance and punctuality:

- Make early contact with the school and keep in touch.
- Work with the school to sort out any issues.
- Make sure that your child understands that you do not approve of absence.

If my child is late for school what should I do?

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Can I take my child out of school for another reason?

The Education Regulations 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional. Parents should complete a request for leave of absence in advance, using the form from the school office. In the event of a holiday or unauthorised absence being taken, a Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority in accordance with RBWM policy. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

Will I be made aware if my child's attendance is a concern?

Parents receive information about their child's attendance in school reports, during parents evening and at any time on request. This will tell you if your child's attendance is 100%, 96%+ or less than 96%, in which case the exact percentage will be given. Concerns about any aspects of a child's attendance or punctuality will be communicated to the parents. If there is no improvement, you may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.