

THE DHARMA PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

This is a whole school policy and includes EYFS

Aims and Objectives:

This policy ensures that all staff, parents and trustees in our school are fully aware and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance, and to ensure systems are in place to review patterns in pupils' attendance, which may alert the school to trends that might indicate welfare concerns.

We want to encourage children to be enthusiastic in all that they do and to attain the highest standards of which they are capable as individuals, in order to meet the challenges of the world and their futures with confidence.

Regular attendance and punctuality are important for children. Pupils who are persistently absent or late can fall behind in their learning, which impacts on their progress. We request that all children start their learning together so that the learning can progress seamlessly.

Procedures:

We ask that parents drop off their children for classes to start promptly at 9.00am. A bell will be rung in the playground at 8.55am to bring the children in. Children arriving after registration has taken place will be need to let the office know so they can be marked in the register.

Parents are asked to inform the school by 9.30am in the event of their child being absent, either via e-mail or telephone. The reason for their absence will be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate national codes. In the event a parent has not contacted the school, office staff will make contact with the family to ascertain the reason for the absence and to ensure the child is safe. Once this is obtained, a record will be made in the attendance register.

If a pupil has to leave the building before the end of the day, the school requires a written (or written via email) parental request before permission may be granted.

Information relating to children's attendance will be included in their end of year reports and included in reports to the board of trustees. For Year 6 children this information will be forwarded in transition documentation. For children leaving nursery, attendance is also reported on in the nursery transfer document.

The school office staff will be responsible for monitoring attendance in each class and for following up absences in an appropriate way, on a day-to-day level.

The main school day finishes at 3.30pm. There is after school supervision until 3.40pm, although we would ask parents to sign their children out and take responsibility for their children at 3.30pm. Children who wish to play in the grounds after school must be supervised by a parent. Children without supervision will be taken inside to wait at 3.40pm.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified and authorised, when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from their parents or carer. Authorised absences are those which the school agrees are unavoidable, e.g. illness, family bereavement, visits to other schools, dates of religious observance, and absences for which leave has been agreed e.g. medical appointments etc.

In line with the government's guidance on attendance (<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>) it is the school, through the discretion of the Head Teacher, that authorises absences, rather than parents.

Unauthorised absence:

Regulations state that an absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even if the absence is supported by a parent.

Wherever possible the school asks that children's appointments, such as those with doctors and dentists, be made outside of school hours. If a child needs to attend an appointment during school time, please notify the school in advance.

Requests for leave of absence:

The Head Teacher has the authority to decide whether or not to authorise an absence. The following factors will be taken into account when making a decision:

- the child's general attendance record
- the timing of the absence

We are aware some families take children out of school for holidays during term time. We would prefer that holidays are only taken in term time if absolutely unavoidable, and on occasion. Outside of special circumstances, holidays will be marked as “unauthorised” in registers. We ask that parents discuss the timing of holidays with their children's teachers to avoid children missing important assessments or events in the calendar year.

Long term absence:

If a child has an illness which results in an absence of more than five days, at the request of the parent, the school will do all it can to send learning material home, so the child can progress with school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, the school will contact support services at Brighton & Hove City Council (the Home Tuition Service), so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given tuition outside of school. Please see <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/schools/home-tuition-children-unable-go-school>

Repeated unauthorised absence:

If a child is reluctant to attend school, it is not advisable to give in to pressure and to excuse them from attending, or to withhold the reason for their absence from the school. This may give the child the impression that attending school does not matter and can make the situation worse in the long term. Also, if we are aware of a child's reticence to attend, steps can be taken to help resolve any issues within school that might be contributing to the situation.

In the event of persistent or regular absence parents are invited to meet with teachers/ the Head Teacher to ascertain the cause and to work to resolve any difficulties.

If a child takes 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or agreed leave of absence) the school has a legal duty to report attendance issues to the Brighton and Hove Authority Education Welfare Officer.

EARLY YEARS FUNDING AND ATTENDANCE

If a child misses a few regular funded sessions because of illness or for another reason, regrettably extra hours cannot be claimed to make up the time. Children are expected to attend at least 80% of the free hours they have been given unless there is a pertinent reason why they are unable to do so e.g. long term illness (20% absence equates to approximately two weeks per term).

If a child does not attend on a regular basis, it is possible that government EY funding could be withdrawn for the time missed. Unfortunately, in this instance parents would be expected to pay for these hours. Early Years places are in part funded by the government and parents are encouraged to ensure that their children attend as regularly as possible and avoid taking holidays during term time.

If holidays are taken it is possible that subsequent absences, due to illness or any other reason, will be taken into account when calculating the time a child has attended. For example, if a child misses two weeks in the term due to a holiday and then incurs further absences during that term, these absences will be added to the holiday already taken to calculate the overall percentage of time a child has missed.

We will not report every absence, but we are obliged to inform the finance department of the local authority if a child's attendance drops significantly during the term.

Person Responsible for reviewing this policy	CE/Head
Date Ratified by Trustees	12/17
Date of last review	12/15
Date of this review	12/17
Date of next review	12/19