


## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### DATE PALM STATEMENT of INTENT

At Date Palm our vision is for the School to ensure our pupils grow like a Date Palm tree – with **strong foundations, lofty branches and produce fresh fruit:**

- ✓ To build **Strong Foundations for Character Development** that:  
Instil values; inspire each pupil; display best manners.
- ✓ To have **Lofty Branches of Educational Excellence** that will:  
Provide a broad and varied range of experiences and learning opportunities; help each pupil progress and develop in all aspects; support their skills and talents.
- ✓ To produce **Fresh Fruit that provides services to their Communities** in order to:  
Become responsible and confident citizens; make a positive difference; commit to charitable endeavours; become effective contributors towards Britain's future.

Reviewed by	Position	Signature
Afsana Khanam	Deputy Head / DSL	
Sabina Yesmin	Safeguarding Governor	S.Yesmin

<b>Reviewed:</b> September 2022
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<b>Next review date:</b> September 2023
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PRIMARY

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# Attendance Policy

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## Introduction

Children of school-age must, by law, attend school regularly. Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but because it is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities that are available to them. There may be occasions when a child has to miss school – for example, if they are unwell. Any other absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. In particular, parents/guardian should avoid taking their children out of school during term time in order to go on holiday.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations of 1995 make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purpose of a term-time holiday. The regulations state that leave of absence can only be granted by the Head teacher of the school. Head teacher may grant up to 10 school-days leave in a school year should they consider that this would not be harmful to a child's education but parents/guardians should not expect such leave to be granted automatically.

The Government's own guidance on the issue of term time holidays states: 'Parents/guardians should not normally take pupils on holiday in term'. It also adds: 'if a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised'. Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/guardian), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

## Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/guardian writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents/guardians will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent/guardian takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence. Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reason:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/ dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.

## Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/guardian.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/guardian.

Absences will not be authorised for the following reasons:

- Parents/guardians keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Shopping
- looking after other children
- Holidays because of cheaper price
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Truancy before or during the school day

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/guardians and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

There will be a £40 fine for every unauthorised day off (**please see appendix A**)

***Taking unauthorised holidays during term time may result in your child being removed from the school roll.***

## School Responsibilities



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The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance to both statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and the school office will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian and record outcome on the 'daily absence record'.

The attendance lead will inspect registers weekly in order to ensure that these are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.

A note/appointment letter must be sent to the school **prior** to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the Head teacher should be informed.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then endeavour to contact the child's parents or carers straight away, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Children and parents/guardians are constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance and punctuality.

Attendance information will be included in the child's annual written report.

The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:

- The Head teacher, class teachers will communicate regularly with parents on the attendance matters where appropriate.
- Appropriate personal encouragement including certificate and prizes will be offered to individual children;
- Remind parents of the importance of ensuring their children's regular, uninterrupted school attendance.
- Remind parents they do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted, and that all leave is at the discretion of the Head teacher/ for exceptional circumstances with otherwise good attendance above 96%.
- Regular contact with parents identified for monitoring the attendance of their children.



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## Parents' Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.

Parents/Guardians should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should contact the school as soon as possible, preferably on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by letter or in person.

Parents/Guardians may not authorise their child's absence- only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents/guardian. (Should parents/guardians fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised).

Parents/Guardians should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for registration (8.15 am.) If a child arrives after 8.20 am, parent/guardian should report directly to the school office to ensure the register is updated for Health & Safety reasons.

## Requests for leave of absence

Holidays during term time will not be authorised unless under exceptional circumstances and attendance is above 96%. Parents should complete a form outlining why they are requesting a holiday.

Authorisation is the discretion of the Head teacher and individual cases will be considered. Should school not agree to grant leave and the parents/guardians take their child on holiday this will be counted as unauthorised absence. Should leave be granted but the child remains absent for longer than agreed this extra time, will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

## Long Term Absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will contact the parent/guardian to come and take material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

## Repeated unauthorised absences



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The school will contact the parent/guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Education Welfare Officer who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents/guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

There will be a £40 fine for every unauthorised day off **please see appendix A**

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/guardians fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

### **Education Welfare Officer**

Support and guidance on attendance is always available via the LA education welfare officers.

### **Strategies for improving attendance / punctuality**

Good (and in some cases improved) attendance will be promoted and rewarded by certificates issued every term. All the children who have 100 percent attendance in any one term will receive an excellent certificate for attendance. There are special certificates/prizes for any child who has 100 percent attendance for a whole year.

Attendance statistics will be collected and used in conjunction with other data for analysis to aid improvement

Children and parents are constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance and punctuality, not only at school but for their future life skills. Children who have been absent for any extended period of time may require a structured programme of re-integration.



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### **Attendance Targets**

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of twenty-five years. This policy will be reviewed every two years, unless any changes need to be made.



## APPENDIX A

**Your child's  
education is  
really important**

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### **Regular attendance at school:**

- Improves your child's chances of getting good qualifications and a good job
- Reduces the chances of your child becoming vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime

If your child is absent from school for a minimum of 20 school sessions (10 school days) during a school term, without permission, then you are committing an offence. This leaflet explains what counts as an unauthorised absence and what happens if your child's attendance at school is considered poor.

### **What counts as unauthorised absence?**

- Any absence from school that the school has not permitted or cannot give permission for
- Truancy from school, with or without parent's knowledge (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- Inappropriate parentally-condoned absence (ie, you know your child is absent from school and you do nothing about it)
- Delayed return from a period of leave of absence, which has been approved by the school
- Late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

### **Is a warning given?**

Yes. The school will send you a formal letter or the Head Teacher will contact the Parents/Guardian.

This warning will also include details of your child's absences. If you receive a warning this is an opportunity for you to work with the school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice.



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Your child must have no further unauthorised absences from school from the date of the letter. If your child's unauthorised absence continues and reaches 20 sessions (10 school days) or more, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning may be issued. This depends on each individual case.

However, the school is not required to send a warning letter where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.

### **What is a Penalty Notice?**

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution. You have to pay a fine but you do not have to appear in Court. You also have to make sure that your child's attendance at school improves.

Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

### **What are the costs?**

£40 for each day missed (per child).

### **How are Penalty Notices issued?**

They are emailed to you.

### **Is there an appeal process?**

There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice.

### **How do I pay?**

Via bank transfer or cash

### **What happens if I don't pay?**

Your child will not be allowed to return to school until payment is made and you may be prosecuted under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.

If proven this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on individual circumstances

## APPENDIX B

### Absence from school

Attendance during one school year	Equal days absent	Which is approximately	Which means this number of lessons will be missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
75%	48 days	10 weeks	250 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks	340 lessons

### It is important to arrive at school on time because

Minutes late per day during the school day	Equal days worth of teaching lost in a year
5 minutes	3.7 days
10 minutes	7.4 days
15 minutes	10 days
20 minutes	14.7 days
30 minutes	22 days

### What are the rules on attendance?

Parents have to make sure that children receive full time education and that their children attend regularly and stay at school.

It is the law – *Section 36 of the Education Act*

Parents can be taken to court for breaking the law (*Section 199 of the Education Act*)

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

[http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ignl/education and learning/schools/school attendance and welfare.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ignl/education%20and%20learning/schools/school_attendance_and_welfare.aspx)