



West Dorset Schools Collaboration

Our Attendance Policy 2021/22

What is an attendance policy?

Under the Education Regulations 1995 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present. The register must also indicate why a pupil is absent. Our policy aims to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and ensure the school's legal responsibility is met.

What is considered to be 'good' attendance?

The government have said that any child with below 90% attendance is a Persistent Absentee. This is a very low level of attendance and cause for serious concern. We want to prevent any child's attendance falling to this level and have a target attendance of 95%
Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning, promoting positive relationships and developing good attitudes to education. Research shows a strong link between a good history of attendance and achievement in GCSE exams.

What is an acceptable absence?

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason. Only the school can make an absence authorised. An absence is classified as unauthorised when the school believes a child is away from school without good reason; for example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours. School will not authorise an absence when no prior notice has been given to school, unless in very exceptional circumstances.

100% *Perfection*

98% *Impressive*
Equates to 4 school days off each year.

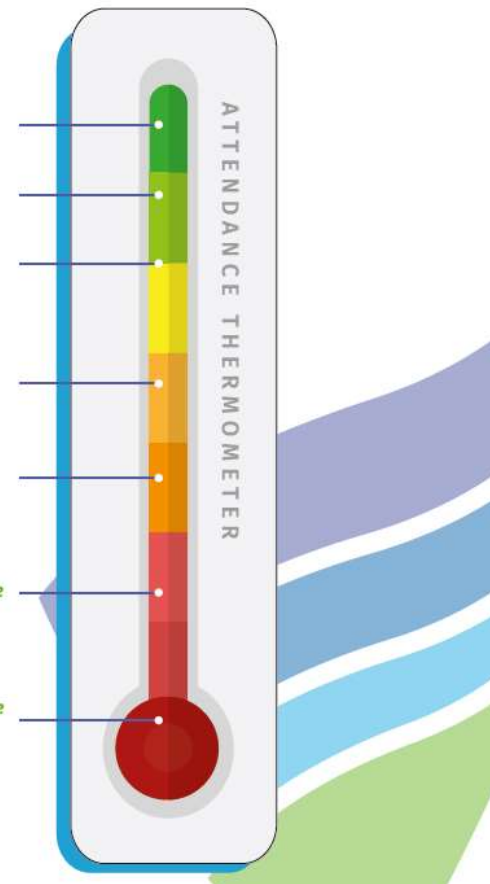
97% *Good*
Equates to 7 school days off each year.

95% *Nearly there*
Equates to 9 school days off each year.

94% *Coasting*
Needs to improve
Equates to 11 school days off each year.

90% *Danger Zone*
Equates to 1 month off each year.

80% *Danger Zone*
Equates to 2 months off each year.



Penalty Notices

School attendance is a legal requirement. The law states that "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence." S444(1) Education Act, 1996. If having gone through inclusion panels, a child still has poor attendance, Dorset Council may take Legal Action against parents and carers. This could result in issuing a £120 Penalty Notice, a Parenting Order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £2,500.

The school and Dorset Council work hard with children and parents to avoid taking Legal Action.

Staff and parents will work together to ensure good attendance.

Parents will:

Ensure that their child arrives at school on time by 8.50am
Ensure any child arriving after the start of school accesses school via the main entrance

Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30 am

Contact the school in advance if their child will be absent for any reason (e.g.hospital appointment) – please note that it is expected that most appointments will occur outside school hours

Make any requests for leave of absence on a leave of absence form available from the school office or website

School will:

Take registration each morning and afternoon (two sessions per day) Consistently record reasons for absence and indicate if absence is authorised or not

Record an attendance as 'late' after 9.00am; (arrival after 9.20am is deemed 'late after register closes' and is classified as an absence for the morning session)

Contact parents / carers on the first day of any absence if no reason is given by 9.30 am

If we are concerned about your child's attendance we will write to you.

We will also try to talk to you to find out if there is a problem. If attendance continues to be low, you will be invited into school to discuss any issues. These meetings are an opportunity for you, your child (where appropriate) and the school to discuss any issues together.

At these meetings, a plan should be agreed to try and solve any problems. The plan should then be reviewed at a further meeting with the school. If after this, attendance continues to be poor, we will contact Dorset Council. We will make their Dorset Council Inclusion Lead aware of our concerns. You are then likely to be invited into school for an Inclusion Panel meeting which involves the Dorset Council Inclusion Lead for **school name**.

The Inclusion Panel involves you, your child (where appropriate), the school, the DC Inclusion lead and any other professionals who may be involved. The Panel will listen to everyone and come up with a plan to try to solve any problems.

Working in Partnership

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. If you have any concerns about your child's attitude to school please talk to your child's class teacher.

How are attendance figures worked out?

A register is taken in school at 8.50am each morning and 1.00pm each afternoon. A child will receive a 'mark' for each session; these marks are totalled by school and given as a percentage (e.g. if a child attends school all week they will receive 100%; if a child is absent for one day they will have an attendance of 80% for that week).

How is lateness recorded?

If a child arrives 'late' before 9.20am the child will receive a 'late' mark but will be considered as 'attending' the morning session. If a child arrives in school after 9.20am the child is considered to have been 'absent' for the session.

Being frequently late for school also adds up to lost learning:

Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.

Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.

Arriving 30 minutes late is the same as being absent for 19 days a year

