



## **Attendance Policy**

This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS

### **1. Introduction**

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance records tend to achieve less in their educational career. Evidence shows that children who attend school regularly are more successful, not only in school, but in all areas of life.

The Government expects the following from schools:

- to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- to ensure every pupil has high levels of attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to;
- to act early to address patterns of absence;
- to encourage parents/guardians to perform their legal duties by ensuring their child attends school regularly;
- to ensure all pupils are punctual to lessons.

### **2. School Day**

All pupils are required to be in school by:

- Years 3 to 8 - 08:00
- Reception, Years 1 and 2 - 08:45
- Nursery - 09:00

The normal school day ends at the following times:

- Years 3 to 8 – 15:30; Wednesday - 15:15
- Reception, Years 1 and 2 – 15:00
- Nursery – 15:00

Pupils are registered at both the start of the morning and afternoon sessions each day.

### **3. Notifying the school of illness**

If an occasion arises where a child is ill, a parent or guardian should contact the school by 08:30 by sending an e-mail to **absence@dolphinschool.com** or by telephoning the school on **0118 934 1277**, for each day of absence. If the school has not heard from a parent/guardian, the school will always telephone to check a child's whereabouts.

We ask that parents/guardians contact us each day their child is going to be absent in order that we can keep our records updated and keep abreast of their progress to full health and anticipated return date.

### **4. Late Arrival**

Shortly after the arrival times stated above in section 2, all pupils will be marked present, late or absent. It is therefore essential that if a pupil arrives late, they sign in at the School Reception, so our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know the exact location of every pupil.

Our systems are again updated by 08:30 (Years 3 – 8), 09:15 (Reception, Years 1 and 2) and 09:30 (Nursery) when we compile a final Registration for the morning. If parents/guardians have not contacted the school by telephone or email by 08:30, a list will be generated of pupils who are not present, and this will prompt our Reception team to contact them.

Lateness is taken as seriously as non-attendance. The start of the school day is an important time for children to develop their social skills with their peers, hear about news of special events, as well as prepare them for their learning.

Persistent late arrival will result in a formal letter from the school. (See paragraph 7.2)

### **5. Leaving school early during the day**

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff, for a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture. If a pupil must leave the school during the day for illness or a parent is collecting them for a medical appointment, they are required to sign out at Reception.

If a pupil must leave the school for any other reason, requests should be made to the school. (See paragraph 6)

### **6. Requests for absence**

#### **6.1 Requesting absence**

If parents/guardians wish to request an absence for any planned appointment or event, they should make the request in writing via email and send it to:

**headmaster@dolphinschool.com** marked 'absence request'.

## **6.2 Compassionate grounds or exceptional circumstances**

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances **should be made in writing** to the Headmaster in advance of the proposed absence when possible. Absence in exceptional circumstances does **not** include the following:

- birthdays;
- holidays;
- days out as a special treat;
- other family celebrations.

## **6.3 Authorising absence**

The Government has confirmed that schools, not parents/guardians, authorise an absence.

The main areas where the school will authorise an absence are given below:

### **6.3.1. Illness/Injury**

Where schools accept that a pupil is ill or injured which requires the child to miss school, the school must authorise the absence but can request parents/guardians to provide medical evidence to support illness.

### **6.3.2 Appointments**

Dental and medical appointments are authorised absences but, where possible, such appointments should be made for out of school hours.

### **6.3.3 Holidays**

The Regulations state that time off for family holidays is not a right. Parents/guardians do not have the right to take a child out of school during term time. By law parents/guardians must ask prior permission for their child to miss school. The Regulations do not allow the school to give retrospective approval.

The Headmaster is only able to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If the Headmaster grants a leave request, it is for him to determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday. Parents/guardians could face prosecution and/or a fine if they take their child out of school without permission. Unauthorised absences will be reported to the Local Authority at the discretion of the Headmaster.

### **6.3.4 Religious observance**

The school will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the

parents/guardians belong. Where necessary, the school may seek confirmation from that religious body that the day has been set apart for religious observance.

### 6.3.5 Exceptional circumstances / unavoidable causes

Authorised absence will be granted for compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

## 7. Poor attendance

Dolphin School expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of 90% and above; any figure below this is deemed as poor attendance.

### 7.1 Attendance and levels of achievement

Poor attendance is normally defined as anything below 90%.

Days Absent	Overall Attendance % by end of year
1	99.5%
5	97.5%
10	95%
20	90%
30	85%

- For every day of school missed by a pupil it will reduce their attendance by 0.5%.
- Ten whole days of school missed equates to 95% attendance.
- Twenty whole days of school missed equates to 90% attendance.
- By the time a pupil is persistently absent (85% attendance – see 7.2 below) they have missed 6 weeks or half a term of schooling.
- There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and lower levels of achievement. The Department for Education in *'The link between attendance and attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4'*, March 2016, states:

At Key Stage 2 (age 7-11):

*'For pupils at the end of KS2, as the level of overall absence increases the proportion of pupils achieving a level 4 or above and a level 5 or above in reading and mathematics tests decreases. This link between overall absence and attainment is evident whether we look at increasing overall absence rates or increasing number of weeks missed.'* Level 4 is the national average for 11-year-olds at the end of Year Six.

At Key Stage 4 (age 14-16):

*'For pupils at the end of KS4 as the level of overall absence increases, the percentage of pupils achieving the three KS4 attainment measures decreases. As for KS2, the link between overall*

*absence and attainment is evident when looking at increasing overall absence rates or increasing numbers of weeks missed.'*

- *Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school, only 3 per cent manage to achieve five GCSEs, grades 4-9 (previously A\*-C), including English and maths.*
- *Of pupils who miss between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of school, only 35 per cent manage to achieve five GCSEs, grades 4-9 (previously A\*-C), including English and maths.*
- *Of pupils who miss less than 5 per cent of school, 73 per cent achieve five GCSEs, grades 4-9 (previously A\*-C), including English and maths.*

## **7.2 Persistent lateness and absence**

Poor attendance (below 90%) will result in a formal letter from the school.

The Department for Education has changed the definition of 'Persistent Absence' to deal with the reality of pupil absenteeism in schools and its impact on their learning.

Pupils whose attendance is below 85 per cent are now officially classed as 'Persistent Absentees'. The school will be obliged to contact the parents/guardians if a child's attendance drops below that figure. If attendance does not improve and absence continues to be persistent, the school will contact Wokingham Educational Welfare Service.

Parents can be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority for their child's non-attendance. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The Wokingham Education Welfare Service is located at:

Brambles	Children's	Centre
Budges		Gardens
Wokingham		
Berkshire		
RG40 1PX		

Telephone: 0118 974 6193

## **8. Summary of the law taken from the guidelines for ISI inspection**

All Independent schools - Regulation 3(15) "The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006".

Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers, an Admissions register, known as the "School Roll", and an Attendance register. School Inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

The Regulations covering school admission and attendance are very prescriptive reflecting the importance that successive governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and during the afternoon for all day pupils. The Regulations specify the contents of both registers and the way they are operated and maintained.

### **9. Attendance registration system**

The school uses an electronic register system in its MIS which enables the school to record, report and monitor pupil attendance and absence.

### **10. Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities**

The school's attendance register is backed up, in the form of an electronic copy, at least once a month and records are retained for three years after the end of the school year in question.

All schools in membership of ISC take part in that organisation's annual census of pupils. From January 2009 it has been mandatory to include pupil ethnic monitoring data using the same methodology as the maintained sector.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools may therefore receive an enquiry about whether they are educating a specific child. Schools are required to alert their local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has:

- been absent without authority for 10 consecutive school days, or
- failed to attend school regularly, or
- been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing.

*January 2019*

*Review Date: January 2020*