



## Attendance Policy

Headteacher signature	L Harvey
School Governance Signature (Chair of Management Team)	A Harmer / S. Gosling
Date of latest review	September 2022
Regularity of review	Every 3 years

This policy applies to all children on roll at Dame Catherine Harpur's School and Nursery.

**The aims of the school policy are:**

- to support the Dame Catherine Harpur's School ethos in recognising that parents play a valuable role in children's education and that education is broader than a child's time in school
- to ensure that there is a clarity for families as to the school expectations in terms of attendance for children on roll.
- to support good attendance and punctuality
- to ensure effective safeguarding of children

The staff and leadership team at Dame Catherine's regard good attendance and punctuality as important in providing positive opportunities for children's education and supporting their social and emotional wellbeing. We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and punctuality. At the same time Dame Catherine's is a school which centres ourselves around being sympathetic and supportive to individual family circumstances, approaches to education and priorities for their own children's education.

It is therefore crucial that we ensure our school works in partnership with parents promote good attendance and punctuality.

**In order to achieve these aims the school will:**

- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration.
- Have clear guidelines as to when we authorise absence, including what we see as valuable educational opportunities for children to take part in with parents in school term-time.
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, governors (SMT) and pupils value attendance and punctuality.
- Comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Have systems in place offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures.
- Ensure our governors (SMT) takes an active role in promoting good attendance.
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies.

### **Expectations.**

The school expects its pupils to:

- To attend regularly and on time.
- To be prepared adequately for the school day.
- To comply with the school policies and procedures.

### **The school expects its parents/carers**

- To encourage their children to attend school every day, on time.
- To contact the school on the first day of absence.
- To arrange holidays and medical appointments outside school hours as far as is possible.
- To regularly update emergency contact details.

### **Registration.**

The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (e.g. to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day.)

The registers are marked at the beginning of each session, morning and afternoon. Registers are marked in the **first ten minutes** of the start of the school day.

School begins at 9.00am and the doors are open from 8:55am. Children will be welcomed into school from the front playground. Younger children will use the front door and older children (7-11) will enter the school through their cloakroom. The front door will be closed again at 9.05am. We value this opportunity for staff to talk with parents, so if parents would like to have a conversation with a staff member, we appreciate children arriving by 9.00am at the very latest to enable conversations to still happen, whilst also ensuring that our learning is not disrupted.

School finishes for all children at 4.00pm. Children will be dismissed by staff from the front playground or the front / back door (depending on weather. Parents are asked to wait in the school playground.

Pupils arriving after the door is closed (after 9.05am) must enter the school via the main entrance at the front of the building by ringing the bell where they will be met by a member of staff. **Parents** will be expected to sign their child in, recording their name, time of arrival and reason for lateness in the reception area. The pupil will then be escorted to their classroom by this staff member. It is vital that any pupil arriving late is signed in, in order to comply with Health and Safety procedures. Pupils arriving after the registers are taken (by 9:05 am) will be marked with a late (L) mark.

The registers are closed at 9:30am. Any pupils arriving after this time will be regarded as absent for the full morning session even though they are present in school. This will be coded as an unauthorised absence (U) in the register.

Registration will be taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session. 1:00pm.

### **Pre-school**

Pre-school / Nursery's morning session begins at 9.00am. Afternoon session begins at 1.00pm.

### **Authorised Absence**

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Religious Observance
- Medical or Dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Where possible parents/carers should try to arrange these appointments for out of school hours.
- Permanent or fixed term exclusions.

Other circumstances

We recognise that in maintained schools days out / holidays in term time cannot be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Dame Catherine Harpur's School recognises both the educational and social and emotional value of time spent with parents and carers and that these opportunities are not always available during school holidays for every family. As such we consider authorising time out of school under specific circumstances, but request that this time is not excessive. We might also request that there is evidence of educational learning provided on the child's return to school. We expect parents and carers to understand that as a school we are responsible for the educational progress and well-being of children, and that learning time missed or significant disruption to routines can have a negative impact in numerous ways.

In order for leave / holidays (including visits for individual days) to be authorised, parents and carers must seek authorisation from the headteacher by filling in the appropriate form (appendix A) at least 2 weeks in advance of the time requested unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Our guidelines also wish to make parents / carers aware of the following points:

- We ask that parents do not request more than 10 days of leave / holiday for children in any one school year, unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed by the headteacher (which may be referred to a panel of the governors (SMT))
- Where a child is classed in a persistent absence category, or at risk of persistent absence we will only authorise additional leave / holiday in exceptional circumstances.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Late after registration is closed i.e. after 9:30 a.m. (unless the pupil or parent provides a legitimate reason or evidence for the absence.)
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone.
- Any holiday / days out that have not been pre-authorised by the Headteacher.

### **Patterns of Absence**

First day of absence:

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer should contact the school via telephone before 9am wherever possible. If a parent/carer does not inform the school by 9.30am the school will seek to contact the parents / carers to ascertain why the child is absent.

### **Monitoring attendance and ensuring intervention if required**

Dame Catherine's seeks to ensure that children are '**involved in valuable educational activities**' in line with a national average for school children. Our belief that provision might look different from one child to the next, means that we monitor and evidence this attendance in various ways.

#### **A : Percentage time in educated activity**

We track attendance in education to include any **authorised** days where there is prior agreement that children are involved in **genuine** educationally valuable activities with their parents / carers in an alternative setting in. (Holiday time is classed as not generally classed as an educational activity, but that in **certain agreed circumstances** certain days will be considered as educational experiences, when evidence is provided.) Each case will be discussed with parents / carers, with the final decision lying with the headteacher.

This figure includes sessions agreed as part of flexi-schooling where children are educated with parents ie. these days / sessions are counted as attending educated activity.

#### **B: Percentage time educated at school against 'agreed time' in school**

This figure shows the time spent in school compared to the time agreed between parents and the school ie. For flexi-school children where there is a 3 day per week agreement, this figure takes 3 days a week as 100% for that child.

#### **C: Percentage time in school attending school against full time attendance (DfE figure)**

This figure is calculated counting flexi-school children as absent when they are being officially educated with parents.

Dame Catherine's calculates this figure as required to do so under the DfE regulations, but our school recognises that this **does not** accurately reflect the time children are spending in educated activity.

We use the following indicators to help identify which children could be reaching a level of concern.

**Figure A : Percentage time in educated activity**

Below 93%

**Figure B: Percentage time educated at school against 'agreed time' in school**

Below 93%

**Figure C: Percentage time in school attending school against full time attendance (DfE figure)**

Below 93% for full time children

Below 55.5% for children attending 3 days per week

Each child will be viewed individually according to their circumstances and, should the school have any concerns, we will discuss this with parents along with the impact of this, how this might be monitored further and strategies to address this. Class teachers will also discuss the impact of absences with the headteacher.

When considering any data which involves percentage of time spent in school, we will also compare with a national state school system. If we are monitoring 'time spent in school,' would be disingenuous to consider our school day against the average state school day, given that it is 40 mins longer. Given that we run a 38 week year, this 200 mins per week equates to nearly 20 days extra a year.

Should there be concerns, however, the following options might be considered:

- Parents to provide evidence (such as medical evidence)
- A specific plan be put in place
- Involvement of other agencies where a family needs support.

**Recording absences**

Parents are required to offer a reason for any period of absence, before the absence if planned by used the 'notice of absence form', or on the first day of absence if unplanned.

This should be by contacting the school office by phone, preferably by 9am. Should a child not arrive in school by 9.30am the school will seek to contact parents / carers in order to determine the reason for absence.

The school might request that a period of absence is explained in writing by completing a notice of absence form on the child's return to school. The school will then decide if it wishes to record the absence as authorised or unauthorised based on guidance set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations.

### **Monitoring attendance**

The Headteacher and school leaders will review the attendance and punctuality of pupils on roll on a regular basis.

### **The School's approach to Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality.**

We recognise that parents pay fees for their child to attend school. As such children attend our school because it is where the parents choose for their child to be. We recognise that a child's desire to be in school will not come from any long-term attendance award, as these do not fit our school. Instead, we develop our provision so that each individual feels that attending school is intrinsic to their life ie. they want to be in school. Where there is an issue with any individual, we work with that family to discuss how to manage the situation in a way which fits their circumstances.

### **Pupils who do not attend for a period of time / who are missing**

Where a child on roll has not attended school for over 5 days and all reasonable attempts have been made to contact parents / carers, the school will notify the appropriate Local Authority.

### **Removal of pupils from the school register**

Where a parent chooses to remove the child from the school permanently for any reason, they will be requested to complete and exit form and discuss this with the headteacher. (appendix B)

Where there is no evidenced educational setting which the child is moving to, the school will contact the appropriate body within the Local Authority ie. to notify that the parents / carers will be home schooling. This is also the case where the parents / carers remove their child, giving the reason on home-schooling.

Should Dame Catherine's not hear from a child's new educational setting within a reasonable timescale, it will contact the school in order to clarify that the child is on roll at that new setting, before transferring relevant information.

Appendix A

**Notification of Absence During Term Time**

Full name of child / children .....

Reason for absence (eg. medical appointment, funeral, holiday)

Date / dates of absence for the period .....

Number of days in total .....

Destination ( country and city / town) .....

*Please note that parents need to apply in advance for time out of school for a holiday, providing a minimum of 2 weeks notice, outlining why it is necessary to take the holiday in term time ie outlining the exceptional circumstances. All absences which have not been agreed in advance will be recorded as unauthorised.*

The circumstances and reason for the request for leave are: -

.....  
.....  
.....

Signature of parent / carer .....

**Please complete and return this form to the school office. In the case of requests for holiday during term time, the school will confirm whether this will be authorised leave within 7 days.**

---

**For Office Use Only ( for children on roll )**

Current Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time ..... (this academic year)

Headteacher signature .....

In the case of holiday request            authorised / taken as unauthorised

Recorded in register as ..... Signature (office) ..... Date .....

Notification of decision: Date response sent to parent/carer.....(attach copy)



Appendix B

Name of child

Date last attended if not currently attending:

Reason(s) for leaving:

Please include in this box the name of the child's new school. We will contact this school to transfer records and to check the child is attending.

Should the name of a school not be provided, we will contact the Local Authority to inform them that the child is no longer attending this school.

**To be completed by the headteacher.**

I confirm that the parent/carer has discussed with me the reasons for leaving.  
Response to parent / carer comments.

Details of attendance at school.

Signed:  Date:

Name (please print):

Position within School:

