



Attendance Policy

**Dolphin School Trust
inc. Noah's Ark Nurseries**

Reviewed by:	Lucy Price
Last reviewed:	January 2025
Next review:	September 2026

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

At Dolphin School, we believe that regular and punctual attendance is vital for pupils' academic success, personal growth, and well-being. Following the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance, **Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)**, this policy reinforces our commitment to promoting regular attendance as a whole-school priority.

This policy applies to all pupils, including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children in Nursery and Reception. At Dolphin School, we aim to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to thrive by attending school consistently.

2. A Whole-School Approach to Attendance

Dolphin School is committed to fostering a culture where attendance is everyone's responsibility. All members of our school community—including pupils, parents, staff, and governors—play a role in promoting and maintaining high attendance standards.

- a. **Staff Responsibility:** All staff at Dolphin School, including teachers, support staff, and the leadership team, are responsible for promoting and ensuring regular attendance.
- b. **Communication:** Attendance is regularly highlighted in our newsletters, school assemblies, and parent communications, emphasising the importance of consistency and punctuality.

3. Attendance Expectations

- a. Pupils are expected to attend school every day during term time, arriving promptly for the start of the school day. The school day begins at 8:30 am, and dismissal times vary by year group, as outlined in the Family Handbook.
- b. Pupils are expected to maintain at least 95% attendance.
- c. Nursery pupils, though not of compulsory school age, are encouraged to attend regularly to establish good habits early.
- d. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking holidays during term time.

4. Absence Reporting

- a. **Illness or Unforeseen Absence:** Parents must notify the school by telephone or via the Parent Portal before 08:15 on the day of absence if their child is unable to attend. If no notification is received, the school will contact the parents to confirm the child's safety.
- b. **Planned Absence:** Requests for medical appointments or other planned absences should be submitted in writing to the school office as far in advance as possible. Exceptional absence requests should be directed to the Headteacher for approval with as much notice as possible.
- c. **Authorised Absence:** Includes illness, unavoidable medical appointments, religious observances, and exceptional circumstances. Medical evidence may be requested for absences longer than five consecutive days.

- d. **Unauthorised Absence:** Includes term-time holidays or absences without a valid reason. The school may issue Fixed Penalty Notices in consultation with the local authority (Wandsworth Council) for unauthorised absences.

5. Early Intervention and Support

Dolphin School is dedicated to identifying and addressing attendance concerns early:

- a. **First-Day Response:** If a child is absent without explanation, the school will contact parents on the first day of absence.
- b. **Regular Monitoring:** Attendance data is reviewed half-termly to identify patterns of absenteeism.
- c. **Support for Families:** If attendance falls below 90%, parents will be contacted to discuss strategies to address concerns and work collaboratively to remove barriers to regular attendance.

6. Leave of Absence

Term-time leave of absence is strongly discouraged unless absolutely necessary. Exceptional circumstances must be discussed with the Headteacher, and requests should be submitted in writing. Holidays during term time will not be authorised.

7. Persistent Absenteeism and Legal Intervention

The school defines persistent absenteeism as attendance below 90%. In cases where attendance does not improve despite intervention, the school may take further steps, including:

- a. **Collaboration with Local Authorities:** Partnering with the local authority (Wandsworth Council) to address persistent absenteeism or educational neglect.
- b. **Legal Action:** Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices or pursuing legal action if other interventions fail.

8. Promoting Punctuality

Punctuality is a key element of attendance:

- a. **Morning Registration:** Pupils are expected to arrive by 08:50. Late arrivals will be recorded and monitored weekly.
- b. **Persistent Lateness:** Regular lateness will be discussed with parents to identify reasons and develop strategies for improvement.

9. Monitoring and Leadership Accountability

The leadership team, including governors, is committed to maintaining high attendance standards. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the designated Attendance Champion, overseeing attendance data and promoting strategies to address issues.

10. Partnership with Local Authorities

In accordance with statutory requirements, Dolphin School works closely with the local authority (Wandsworth Council) to share attendance data and address concerns about persistent absenteeism or children missing education.

11. Children Missing Education

If a pupil is absent for 10 consecutive school days without authorisation or leaves the school without providing information about their next placement, Dolphin School will notify the local authority (Wandsworth Council) The school will also make a return to the authority for prolonged absences due to illness.

12. A Commitment to Excellence

At Dolphin School, we value every child's education and are committed to ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve their full potential through regular attendance. By working together with parents, staff, and external partners, we aim to create a culture of high attendance and success for every child.