



DUNIPACE PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

November 2024

Being ACE at Dunipace
• Aspirational • Confident • Engaged

ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

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With thanks to Hallglen Primary School for their support and sharing of their resources to build our Attendance Strategy.

Attendance Rationale

Why is attendance important?

Attendance is an important aspect of school life. Here at Dunipace Primary School we want every child to be able to reach their full educational potential, and in order to do so, a high level of school attendance is required. At Dunipace Primary School we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. We also believe here at Dunipace Primary School that our children are ACE: Aspirational Confident Engaged.

Article 28: Every child has a right, and is entitled, to an education. It is both the school, and parents/carers duty to strive for 100% attendance for our pupils. When children are regularly missing school, there is a higher likelihood that they will not achieve as well academically as their peers, they are also more likely to leave school early and less likely to go on to further education.

There is a strong connection between attendance and attainment. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school **every day** unless the reason for the absence is **unavoidable**.

Children should regularly attend school:

- To learn;
- To have fun and make new friends;
- To understand their role as a learner;
- To develop awareness of other cultures, religions, ethnicity and gender difference;
- To achieve;
- To gain qualifications;
- To develop new skills;
- To build confidence and self-esteem;
- To grow as individuals and
- To give all of our children the best possible life chances.

Everyone's roles

Parents/carers, pupils and school staff share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. Everyone has a role to play. Parents/carers have a **legal** responsibility to ensure pupils attend school regularly and on time. Parents/carers also have a responsibility to maintain communication with the school if their child is going to be absent. School is required, by law, to maintain accurate records for each pupil's attendance.

Benefits of attending school

There are many benefits to attending school regularly. Pupils who have higher attendance tend to find their work and learning easier; they build more positive relationships, and their feelings of confidence and self-worth increase. It also supports pupils when transitioning on to High School and Further Education/Employment to put in place a good routine and regular attendance whilst at Primary School.

Every day counts!

The key to ensuring the best learning opportunities and life chances whilst at school comes from excellent attendance and punctuality. Although children may attend every day, if they are late regularly this can result in them missing the start of their day or large chunks of their learning. ***Even just ten minutes late per day means your child misses an average of 1.5 weeks per year!***

Here at Dunipace Primary School we strongly believe that all children should:

- have access to and be receiving an excellent education
- be building positive and supportive relationships with both peers and adults to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

It is the responsibility of all the adults in a child's life to work together to ensure they are supported to achieve this in a way which is suitable to their needs.

Parental responsibility when reporting an absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the school office, by email or telephone, as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Keep school updated about expected return to school

Email: dunipaceprimaryschool@education.falkirk.gov.uk

Telephone: 01324 508820

Authorised absence

This is defined by:

- When your child is unwell
- When they are attending a doctor or hospital appointment
- Attendance at a children's hearing or review
- Immediate family weddings
- Bereavements – immediate family
- Religious observance
- Short term exceptional domestic circumstances (e.g. period after an illness, a domestic situation) causing **serious** disruption to the family home
- Medically certified (admission to hospital)

Unauthorised absence

This is defined by:

- Holidays in term time (other than in exceptional circumstances, for example; if a parent or carer is a member of the armed forces)
- Any absence the school has not been notified of

- Any child whose absence is on-going and remains unexplained for an extended period (10 days) will be referred to the authority as a child missing in education (CME)
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment
- Birthdays

Appointments

Attendance at emergency or prearranged medical appointments are authorised however, the pupil is expected to be in school before and after the appointment time, where possible. Routine appointments should be arranged out of school time. Where this is not possible we would expect children to be in school before/after their appointment.

Home visit

In some circumstances a home visit may be appropriate when we have been unable to contact you or your emergency contacts to determine why your child is not at school. This may be a member of school staff, our Cluster Family Worker or colleagues from Social Work.

Holidays

Only in exceptional circumstances and authorised by the Headteacher, will holidays be recorded as an authorised absence. Parent/carers should submit a request to the Headteacher by email or letter **before** the holiday takes place. A standard council letter will be sent due to an unauthorised holiday absence. Please remember holidays during term time are disruptive to your child's learning.

Team Around the Child (TAC) Meeting

Where there are concerns about a child's non-attendance, it may be appropriate to have a TAC Meeting jointly with social work to discuss these issues.

Legal Framework

Parent/carers have a legal responsibility to provide an explanation for a child's absence. Failure to attend school regularly without explanation may be grounds for a joint referral by social work and school to the Children's Reporter as an outcome from the Team Around the Child Meeting.

Punctuality

Classroom doors are open from when the bell rings at 9am. External doors will be closed as soon as the class line is inside so if you know your child is going to arrive after 9am you must bring them to the school office. *Please do not knock on classroom windows/doors as this is disruptive to the settling of pupils already in class.*

Any child entering school after 9am through the school office will be recorded as late. Late attendance will be recorded and followed up should this become a concern.

Medical

If you are reporting your child absent for medical reasons regularly, it may be appropriate for school to make contact with the school nursing team. The school may then make contact with colleagues in health to request support to improve attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

We will regularly be sending out letters/emails to highlight your child's current attendance percentage if it is below 95%. Please look out for these in your email inbox. If you have any queries about the attendance figure please get in touch with the school.

Remember, if at any time you want to discuss your child's attendance, please phone the office and someone will return your call.

EDUCATION AND PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: If your child is absent

If your child is going to be absent from school, this must be communicated directly to the school office on the first day of absence to share the reason why, and an expected date of return. We would ask that you keep in regular contact with the school if their expected date of return changes.

If we haven't heard from you:

- We will send a Groupcall message asking for you to notify us why your child is absent. Parents/carers must call or email the school office as soon as they receive this message.
- To explain the absence, school staff will follow up with a phone call.
- And we are unable to reach you, the absence will be logged and further attempts will be made to contact you.
- And your child your child is absent for a second day and we have not had contact from you, a Groupcall message will be sent out to you asking for you to notify us why your child is absent – this can be a call to the office or an email. This will be followed up by a phone call from the school.
- We will then try the emergency contacts we have on record.
- And your child is absent for a third day, and we are unable to reach you, we may carry out a home visit, or ask colleagues within Children's Services to carry out a home visit.

Should there be concerns on any day of absence that a child may be at risk of harm, Social Work colleagues will be contacted for additional support.

Just a little bit late doesn't seem like much, but...

They are only missing just...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1.5 weeks per year	Nearly <u>Half a Year</u>
20 minutes per day	1 hour 40 minutes per week	Nearly 2.5 weeks per year	Nearly <u>1 year</u>
Half an hour per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly <u>1.5 years</u>
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Nearly <u>2.5 years</u>

Good attendance means...

Being at school at least 95% of the time which means not having more than 10 days off each year.



You have **175 days** a year when you are not in school! All this time can be used for shopping, holidays and appointments.

