



Nurturing **Ambition Through a Living Faith**

Attendance Policy

1. Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission Statement

Nurturing ambition through a living faith.

Vision Statement

Our academy delivers a purposeful curriculum through its living Christian faith. We nurture ambition through all of our learners in order for them to become positive citizens of tomorrow.

Bible Verse

"Let us not love with words and speech alone but with actions and truth."

— 1 John 3:18

2. Statutory Framework & DfE Guidance Context

This policy reflects statutory requirements and DfE statutory guidance, including:

- **DfE Statutory Guidance: *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*** (mandatory national expectation).
- **National Framework for Penalty Notices:** Implementation of standardized national thresholds for fine issuance.
- **The Education Act 1996 (Section 444)** and **The Children Act 1989/2004**.
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations** (and subsequent amendments).
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** (Children Missing Education protocols).

3. Principles and Strategic Expectations

Receiving a suitable, full-time education is a child's legal entitlement, and ensuring regular attendance is a parental legal responsibility. At Darwen St James', we target **100% attendance** because regular, punctual attendance is essential for academic progress, emotional wellbeing, and safeguarding.

Whole-School Attendance Expectations

None

100% Attendance → Ideal Educational & Social Outcomes

95% Attendance → Equals 0.5 days missed every 2 weeks (School Monitoring Level)

90% Attendance → PERSISTENT ABSENTEE (PA) threshold (1 day missed every 2 weeks)

80% Attendance → SEVERE ABSENTEE (SA) threshold (Equivalent to 1 full year missed over secondary career)

- **Persistent Absence (PA):** Any pupil whose attendance falls to **90% or below** (regardless of whether absence is authorised or unauthorised).
- **Severe Absence (SA):** Any pupil whose attendance falls to **50% or below**. These pupils receive targeted support in partnership with local authority inclusion teams.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Achieving strong attendance is a shared partnership across the school community:

- **Headteacher (Miss Peckson):** Holds overall responsibility for attendance leadership, authorising exceptional leave requests, and approving statutory referrals.
- **Attendance Officer & Pupil Wellbeing Team (Miss Peckson & Ms Evans):** Monitors daily registers, tracks attendance trends, conducts home visits, coordinates Individual Attendance Plans, and manages Local Authority referrals.
- **Parents & Carers:** Legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day on time, notifying the school office daily before 9:00 AM when their child is unwell, and engaging with support plans when attendance concerns arise.
- **Pupils:** Arrive on time in appropriate Active Uniform, ready to learn, and inform staff of any barriers or worries.

5. Daily Registration, Times, and Punctuality Procedures

Daily attendance registers are legal documents. Registers are taken twice daily at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Department / Key Stage	Morning Session Starts	Registration Closes (Late 'L' Code)	Arriving After Close ('U' Code - Unauthorised)	Afternoon Session
Nursery	8:30 AM	9:00 AM	After 9:00 AM	12:00 PM – 12:30 PM
KS1 & KS2	8:55 AM	9:25 AM	After 9:25 AM	KS1: 12:45 PM – 1:05 PM

				KS2: 1:00 PM – 1:05 PM
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- **Code L (Late before registers close):** Pupil is present for the session but marked late.
- **Code U (Late after registers close):** Pupil arrives after registration closes. This counts as a **statutory unauthorised absence** for the morning session.

End of Day Collection

School finishes at **3:20 PM**. Children not collected by 3:25 PM are taken to the main office. If a child is uncollected and parents/emergency contacts cannot be reached, safeguarding procedures are initiated in consultation with Children's Social Care.

6. Daily Absence Follow-Up Protocols

When a pupil is absent without prior explanation, the attendance team follows a strict escalation process:

None

09:00 AM → Class registers close; messaging sent to parents of absent pupils via ClassDojo.

09:30 AM → Automated Truancy Call system activated for unconfirmed absences.

10:30 AM → Direct telephone calls made to secondary emergency contacts.

11:00 AM → Safe & Well Home Visits conducted by wellbeing staff for unconfirmed/vulnerable pupils.

7. Categorisation of Absence and National Penalty Framework

Authorised Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. Absence may be authorised for genuine illness, specialist medical appointments, religious observance (max 1 day per festival / 2 days per year), or exceptional circumstances. Medical evidence (appointment card/letter) may be requested.

Unauthorised Absence & Term-Time Leave

Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips, truancy, or term-time family holidays will **not** be authorised.

National Penalty Notice Framework

In line with national statutory guidelines, penalty notices are issued for unauthorised absences (including unauthorised term-time leave) when thresholds are met:

- **Threshold:** 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period.
- **First Offence:** Issued at £160 per parent, per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days).
- **Second Offence (within 3 years):** Issued at £160 per parent, per child (no discounted rate).
- **Third Offence / Escalation:** Case referred directly to the Local Authority Magistrates' Court for prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

8. Staged Escalation and Support Model

We prioritize working collaboratively with families through an "Support First" approach to remove barriers to attendance:

None

STAGE 1 → Daily Phone Contact / Dojo Messaging.

STAGE 2 → Letter 1: Attendance drops below 95% or 4 unauthorised sessions reached.

STAGE 3 → Letter 2: Attendance drops below 90% (PA). Parent invited to Attendance Review Meeting.

STAGE 4 → Attendance Plan / Contract: Formal targets, support actions (Early Help/CAF), and 6-week review.

STAGE 5 → Referral to Local Authority Inclusion Service (Emma Painter, Inclusion Officer).

STAGE 6 → Formal Statutory Legal Intervention (Penalty Notices, Statutory Prosecution, Parenting Orders).

9. Children Missing Education (CME) and Reintegration

- **10-Day Unauthorised Absence:** Referred to the Local Authority Inclusion Team for joint tracking.
- **20-Day Continuous Unauthorised Absence:** If whereabouts cannot be established following joint health/social care checks, the pupil may be removed from the school roll in accordance with statutory regulations.
- **Reintegration Plans:** For pupils returning from long-term medical absence, the Headteacher, SENCO, and Wellbeing Lead will arrange a structured, phased return with appropriate multi-agency support.

10. Promoting and Celebrating Good Attendance

We actively celebrate high attendance and punctuality through our reward incentives:

- **Weekly Class Rewards:** Class winner announced in Friday Celebration Assembly; class progresses on the school attendance tracking board.

- **School Shop Tokens:** Weekly tokens awarded for 100% attendance and punctuality, redeemable for books, games, or learning equipment at the school shop.
- **Termly Amazon Tablet & Voucher Raffle:** All pupils achieving 100% termly attendance enter a prize draw for Amazon tablets and family shopping vouchers.

11. Policy Links & Document Governance

This policy operates alongside:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy