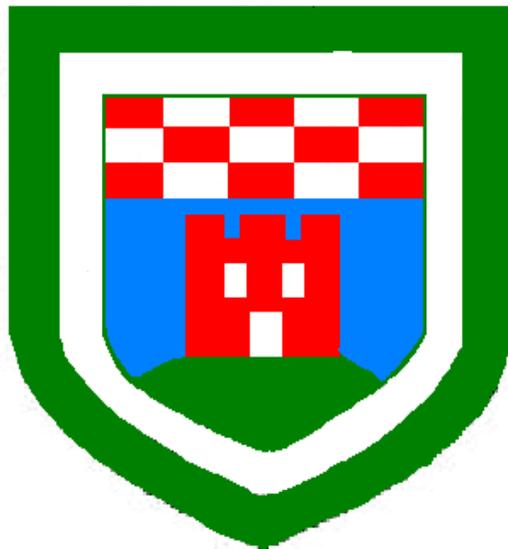




Dalton St. Mary's Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy



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**Dalton St. Mary's Church of England
Primary School**

Here at Dalton St Mary's C of E School we aim

- To provide an atmosphere of trust and confidence where every member of our school community is valued and appreciated and where everyone can enjoy their time in school and can realise their own potential.
- To provide the best quality education for our children so that they can achieve their fullest individual potential.
- To achieve this by striving to maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning and by providing a safe, stimulating and healthy environment where all children and adults feel valued for the contribution they make.
- To develop the children's respect for themselves and for others and to promote a caring, positive attitude towards the community and their local environment.
- To prepare children for life in its widest sense, enabling them to take their place in society as fulfilled and committed individuals, able to play their part in local and wider affairs as well as achieving economic well being.
- To give equal opportunities to all our pupils so that they may become contributors to a society free of all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

Interested parties who wish to discuss this document and its contents further should contact the Chair of Governors or the Head Teacher of Dalton St Mary's C of E School. Please contact the Chair of Governors or the clerk of Dalton St Mary's C of E School if you wish to have a copy of this document in a different format. There may be occasions when parents wish to complain about matters relating to the curriculum, policy documents or collective worship which are the responsibility of the Governing Body and/or the Local Authority. Special, formal arrangements exist for dealing with complaints of this kind. The school complaints procedure is available on our website: <http://www.daltonstmarys.cumbria.sch.uk> or from the school office on request.

Dalton St Mary's C of E School sincerely believe that all pupils benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted on as quickly as possible. Research shows that children who attend school regularly are more likely to be successful. A child who misses a day of school each week misses an equivalent of two whole years in their school life. Missing school leads to gaps in education that become difficult to fill. This policy sets out the school systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance. It should be read alongside the published Cumbria County Council School Absence and Enforcement Policy.

What are the aims of Dalton St Mary's C of E School?

- All pupils have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the National Curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- No pupils will be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other pupils.

It is recognised that

- The majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peers, and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

Dalton St Mary's C of E School expects that all our pupils will

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- Carry out any work provided by the school during an authorised leave period.

Dalton St Mary's C of E School expects that parents will

- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child/children attend school regularly.
- Contact school as soon as is reasonably practicable, ideally by 9.30am, whenever their child is unable to attend. Parents/carers should inform the school via a phone call – the school has an answer-phone for recorded messages which can be used out of hours.
- Ensure their children arrive well-prepared for the school day.
- Contact the school in confidence whenever any problem arises that may keep their children away from school.
- Commit to the Home/School agreement.
- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours when possible.
- Seek permission from school for any leave of absence and understand that the Head teacher is required to refuse to authorise any leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances.

Parents and children can expect the following from Dalton St Mary's C of E School

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact when a pupil is absent without explanation.
- Action on any attendance problem notified to the school.
- Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate.
- Attendance figures to be published on the school website

How do we encourage good attendance?

1. Consistent, clear communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt attendance.
2. Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with governors, parents and pupils.
3. The accurate completion of registers at the start of each session, and within 15 minutes of the start of each session.
4. Recognising and promoting 100% class attendance every week in our Pupil of the Week assembly.
5. Celebrating 100% individual attendance through presentation of certificates at the end of every term.

How do we respond to attendance concerns?

As part of our Safeguarding procedures, non-attendance is always followed up by school. We will

1. Contact parents on the first day of absence if no reason has been received (contact will be in the first instance by telephone).
2. If there is no response to the first contact, then all additional contacts will be telephoned until a satisfactory response is received. If no contact can be established, the school will advise the Education Welfare Officer (Beth Todd).
3. Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging, the parent/carer is informed and support offered from school staff/governors to help resolve the difficulties; this may involve agreeing an Attendance Action Plan with the Head Teacher, Education Welfare Officer and possibly the school's Governor for Attendance. Following Department of Education guidance (A Guide to Absence Statistics, October 2015) and procedures outlined in Cumbria County Council's School Absence Enforcement Policy, the school has a duty to take action when attendance falls below 90%.
4. Where there is no response to school intervention and where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted, the school will refer to the Local Authority Inclusion Team; this will be done through the Attendance Action Plan review process and will involve an Attendance Review Conference with the Local Authority Inclusion Officer.

How do we respond to absence in term time (including holiday requests)?

The school acknowledges that from time to time some parents will want to take their children out of school for holidays. Schools are now required to refuse requests for holiday absence in term time. We advise that wherever possible, absence from school should be avoided as it can have a serious effect on a child's educational progress, and can create difficulties for them on their return to school, particularly if they are joining a new school or class. It is important to note that only the Headteacher can authorise absence from school. Parents/Guardians cannot authorise the absence themselves. An unauthorised absence from school is any absence that is deemed not to be an acceptable reason for missing school. Unauthorised absences from school carry the risk of prosecution under section 444 or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. In accordance with Cumbria County Council's School Absence Enforcement Policy, parents may be issued with a penalty notice if a leave of absence is taken without permission. Headteachers may grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If you believe that your circumstances are exceptional, you must discuss the matter with the Headteacher. In considering a request, the Headteacher will take into account the child's age, the time of year of the absence, and the nature of the visit.⁴ He/she will also consider the child's stage of education and progress and the child's

overall attendance record. Headteachers will not authorise absence unless they believe your circumstances are exceptional. Case law identifies that any holiday or event which can be arranged during school holiday periods should not be authorised during the school term. On occasions, requests may be received for an extended period of absence. It is expected that these occasions should be very exceptional and that the necessity for, and the timing and length of such absence will require careful consideration by the school, families and pupils.

Examples of very exceptional circumstances could include

- A trip to visit extended family living abroad
- The nature of the trip justifies allowing longer than two weeks in term time It is noted that there may be positive benefits for pupils both educationally and culturally to visit extended families living abroad. In all cases, it is best to have a discussion with the Headteacher in order to look at the issues as they affect your child.

How do we respond to lateness?

- After 8.55am children must enter school by the main entrance. This is for safeguarding and security reasons and to help monitor late attendance.
- Parents and children will be asked to give a reason for late attendance
- If a pattern of lateness is emerging, school will contact parents/carers in order to find out the reason for late attendance, where possible action will be agreed to improve the situation. School will endeavour to work with families to help prevent late attendance wherever possible.
- If lateness persists, the Headteacher, will contact parents/carers in order to support parents/carers to improve their child's attendance. Where appropriate, the parent/carer will be invited to visit school to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties.
- Where a consistent pattern of late attendance is emerging, the parent/carer will also be contacted by the governors. The parent/carer will be invited to visit school to work with school staff/governors to help resolve the difficulties, agreeing pro-active actions; this may involve agreeing an Attendance Action Plan with the Head Teacher, Education Welfare Officer and possibly the school's Governor for Attendance. Where there is no response to school intervention and there continues to be a pattern of late attendance the Head Teacher may refer to other support agencies. Our Local Authority Inclusion Officer is: Nicky Braund Smith.

What are our responsibilities?

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to mark the attendance each morning and afternoon. Absences should be accurately recorded with the appropriate code. Children who are late but arrive before the registration period ends should be marked as an L. Those arriving after the registration period ends should be marked as a U. Registration Periods Morning 8.55am – 9.30am Afternoon 1.00pm – 1.20pm School administrators will follow up any absences after the registration period closes with a phone call and a letter and will mark in any child arriving at school after registration ends. The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues.