

DARUL ULOOM

ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2024





This policy should be read in conjunction with:

1. Safeguarding policy
2. GDPR policy
3. Behaviour policy
4. Anti-bullying policy
5. KCSIE Sept 2024
6. DFE Children missing in education
7. DFE guidance for school attendance

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Introduction

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim." - Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 74

"One who treads a path in search of knowledge has his path to Paradise made easy by God..." - Riyadh us-Saleheen, 245

Purpose

This policy ensures that students receive a full-time education that maximises the opportunities for each student to realise his true potential and supports the raising of achievement standards. We will endeavour to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby all students thrive and work with students and families to enable each student to attend Darul Uloom regularly and punctually.

The Darul Uloom will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards that acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping. Still, we will challenge those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. To meet these objectives, we will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Safeguarding

Students may be at risk if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding students' interests is everyone's responsibility within the context of this school, so failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

If school staff have any safeguarding concerns regarding a student's absence, particularly on repeated occasions, then the school's routine safeguarding procedures must be followed (See 'Safeguarding Policy'). They should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual student to decide whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Statutory Duties

The Education Act of 1996's Section 7 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive full-time education through regular attendance at school or other arrangements. Parents are responsible for making sure their children attend Darul Uloom on time.

Register Codes

Students' attendance will be marked using an electronic system (ET-AIMS), and the government's suggested codes will be used (see Appendix 1). The school is responsible for recording student attendance twice a day, once at the start of the morning sessions and once during the afternoon sessions.

Aims and Principles

It is the school's legal responsibility to Record absences and late arrivals on a student's annual report and inform the Local Education Authority if a student does not attend regularly.

1. The school will inform the appropriate Local Education Authority if:

- A student has a low attendance of 85% or below or
 - A student has been absent without authorisation from the school for five or more consecutive school days.
2. The school will liaise with outside agencies, such as the Education Welfare Service, to ensure that all students attend school regularly.
 3. The school will regularly communicate its expectations about student attendance to parents.
 4. Using the Rewards Systems, Students will be encouraged to strive for high attendance levels.
 5. The school will endeavour to improve the overall percentage of students' attendance
 6. The school will endeavour to reduce the level of persistent absence (PA)
 7. The school will endeavour to prioritise attendance and punctuality for all associated with the school, including students, parents, teachers and trustees.
 8. The school will endeavour to develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
 9. The school will endeavour to provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students
 10. The school will endeavour to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data

The school follows the Department for Education (DfE) regulations and guidance. Regular school attendance is a legal responsibility of parents. The school is required by law to record absences and late arrivals on a pupil's annual report. We expect our pupils to have an attendance percentage record of over 96%. Independent schools must notify the Local Education Authority if a pupil does not attend regularly. *The school will notify the relevant local authority if a pupil has a low attendance of 90% or below or has five or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation (as per Birmingham Local Authority Safeguarding Guidance on Missing Children). The school will fully follow the local authority's guidance regarding this matter.*

Roles and responsibilities

Darul Uloom expects all students to be punctual and maintain high attendance. Students should arrive on time and be ready to learn.

Parents

Parents/carers are expected to know what absences are acceptable. Any absence will only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents should be aware of the legal consequences of non-attendance (see below). Parents/carers should be aware that poor punctuality may result in an unauthorised absence being recorded, which could lead to intervention by the Education Welfare Service.

Pupils

Regular attendance is key to student success and a shared responsibility between students, parents, and the school. Students must make every effort to attend school daily, arrive on time for all classes, and be fully prepared to engage in their studies. They are responsible for

ensuring their parents or guardians provide valid explanations for absences through the appropriate communication channels. Additionally, students must take accountability for catching up on missed work during absences to avoid falling behind academically.

Form Tutor

The school expects all form tutors to actively support the regular attendance of their students by addressing any barriers that may hinder good attendance. Tutors should understand attendance data, set realistic targets for all, and encourage excellent punctuality. Assemblies should highlight the importance of attendance, and tutors must ensure that each student knows their attendance percentage. Tutors should monitor attendance data, and report concerns to the SLT, and to parents. They should also provide support to students returning to school after an absence.

Subject teacher

The Darul Uloom expects all subject teachers to encourage punctuality through the positively meeting and greeting all. All lateness to lessons must be challenged appropriately, and logged on ET-Aims. Subject teachers should support students who are returning to the school following an absence by ensuring that adequate resources are provided for their positive re-integration. Subject teachers are expected to monitor their class attendance and identify patterns and report any concerns to the students form Tutor or SLT. The link between attendance and attainment should be actively promoted.

Attendance officer

Attendance should be monitored daily, weekly, half-term, term, and annually. Parents and guardians of students who have been recognised as at-risk should be contacted to encourage an early return to school and minimise absences.

The attendance officer will implement intervention strategies in consultation with the Headteacher and form tutors for all students with attendance figures below 96%. With tutors, the attendance officer should set attendance targets for each tutor group. It is the responsibility of the attendance officer to promote and celebrate good attendance through the use of the school's reward system.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher, alongside the attendance officer, is expected to promote the regular attendance of students by addressing any barriers that may prevent good attendance. The Headteacher should rigorously monitor attendance and liaise, regularly with the school's attendance officer.

Attendance should appear as an item on SLT/staff meetings to allow staff to monitor the progress made towards the meeting of agreed attendance targets. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to oversee the school's attendance policy and practice.

In collaboration with other relevant staff, the Headteacher will monitor, evaluate and review the policy and its impact annually. All attendance related action will be recorded in the school's termly report. The Headteacher will produce an annual report to trustees on matters of attendance.

Trustees

The school's trustee should monitor and evaluate attendance and ensure the policy is carried out.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

It is the Headteachers decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A telephone call on the first day of absence followed by a letter on return from parents/carers does not in itself authorise an absence; only the school's acceptance of the explanation authorises the absence.

Registration and lateness

All students are expected to attend school on time, as punctuality fosters self-discipline and time management while ensuring a calm and orderly start to the school day. The school will regularly communicate its expectations regarding student punctuality to parents. The school day begins at 8:00 am and ends at 4:15 pm for Key Stage 3 and 4:45 pm for Key Stage 4.

Students are allowed to enter the school premises at 7:45 am and are expected to arrive before 7:55 am to join the morning *Adhkar*. Class teachers should be in their positions by 7:50 am. After the morning *Adhkar*, students are expected to go directly to their form class. The school's main entrance will be closed promptly at 8:00 am to ensure safety, and form tutors will conduct morning registration at that time. The registers will remain open until 8:30 am.

School The school strongly discourages late arrival to school and will seek an explanation from the parent. Any student arriving to school after 8:00 am will be considered late **(L)**.

- He needs to report at reception and proceed quickly to his lesson.
- He will be registered by the admin staff/ Attendance Officer at the main reception.
- He may be assigned a 20-minute detention, to be served at the end of the school day

A record of late comers and reason for lateness will be kept and discussed weekly by the attendance officer and SLT/form tutors. Any student lateness will be recorded and patterns of lateness will be analysed and intervened.

School's Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Reporting an Absence – First Day Contact

The purpose of the '**First Day Contact**' procedure is to allow parents to inform the school as soon as possible about their child's absence, the reason for it, and the expected date of return.

- Enable the school to notify parents if their child has not arrived at school.

Process for Reporting and recording an Absence:

1. **Attendance Monitoring:** The Attendance Officer will check the registers by **9:00 a.m.** each day to identify students who are absent without prior notice.
2. **First Day Contact:**
 - If the school has not received prior communication from the parents, a text message will be sent requesting the reason for the child's absence.
 - If there is no response to the text message, a member of the office staff will call the parents by **9:30 a.m.** to obtain an explanation.
3. **Unauthorised Absence:** An absence will be marked as unauthorised (**N/O**) until the school receives and accepts a valid explanation from the parents.
4. **Late arrival:** Pupils arriving before the end of the registration period will be Marked **L** and considered present.
5. **Arrival after registration close:** Students arriving after **8:30 a.m.** will be marked **U**. The only common exceptions to this are severe weather conditions or travel disruptions due to accidents.

Parents Communication Regarding Absences

Parents are required to provide a valid explanation for their child's absence during the period of non-attendance. The explanation can be submitted using one of the following methods:

- **Phone:** Call the school office at **0121 688 6507** or **07847 597814**.
- **Text:** Send a text message to the school's mobile number: **07847 597814**.
- **Email:** Write to the school office at **contact@darululoom.org.uk**.
- **Written Letter:** Provide a signed and dated letter addressed to the Attendance Officer.

Additional requirements:

- **Medical or Dental Appointments:** Parents should provide the attendance officer with an appointment letter in advance.
- **Educational or Employment Interviews:** If a student is invited to an interview or assessment related to employment, further education, or transferring to another school, parents must show the invitation to the attendance officer in advance.

Absences Due illness or medical Appointments:

Darul Uloom requests that all parents/carers notify the School Office on the first day of their child's absence.

If a student has a medical appointment, the school should be notified at least one day in advance, unless it is an emergency. Missing registration due to a medical or dental appointment will be recorded as an '**authorised absence**'. In cases where appointments cannot be scheduled outside school hours, students should only be absent for the minimum time necessary.

Please note that taking the rest of the day off, before or after a dental appointment, will **not** be accepted as a valid reason for an authorised absence.

Medical Evidence and Legal Responsibility

The school may request medical evidence if a student's non-attendance is due to illness or medical appointments. It is a legal responsibility for parents to ensure their child attends school every day of the academic year. The only acceptable reasons for absence are as follows:

1. **Illness:** The student is too unwell to attend school. In such cases, the absence should be kept as short as possible to minimise impact on learning. Parents/guardians are asked to call the school on the first morning of illness and on any subsequent days the student is unable to attend.
2. **Medical Appointments:** The student has an urgent medical or dental appointment that cannot be scheduled outside school hours. Routine or non-urgent appointments should, wherever possible, be made during school holidays or outside of school hours.
3. **Extended Absence Due to Illness:** If a student is absent for five or more consecutive days due to illness, parents must provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, or appointment card.
4. **Prolonged Absence Due to Medical Reasons or Bereavement:** If a student is absent for ten or more consecutive days due to medical reasons or bereavement, the attendance officer will liaise with the wellbeing officer and subject teachers to support the student. This ensures the student can catch up on missed work. Additionally, any important information, such as trip letters or notices, will be shared with the student and/or parents during their absence.

Following Up Absences

Day of Absence:	Follow up:
1 st day	If parents have not already contacted the school, a text message will be sent to the parents requesting them to contact the school immediately to explain their child's absence. If school is unsuccessful in receiving any reason for absence, a member of the office staff will contact the parents via telephone on the same day by 9:30 a.m.
3 rd day	<p>If the student is absent for 2 days and the office has failed to contact parents and given emergency contact, then the attendance officer will inform a member of the SLT. The SLT will send a letter to parents (by recorded delivery) urging them to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence.</p> <p>The attendance officer might carry out a home visit on the third day if the school is not happy about the given reason or concerned about the child's well-being. If the parents have still not contacted the school within three school days of the date of the letter, the attendance officer will inform the head teacher</p>
5 th day	If the school has been unable to trace the child after five days, the attendance officer will notify the local authority's Children Missing Education (CME) department. Additionally, the headteacher will send a second letter to the parents following a home visit by the attendance

	<p>officer, urging them to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence.</p> <p>If the parents have not contacted the school within three days of delivering the letter, the student will be removed from the school's admissions register</p>
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Authorised Absence & Leave During Term Time

An 'authorised absence' is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be absent or the school has accepted an explanation offered afterwards by parents as satisfactory justification.

- Acceptable reasons for absence are usually limited to illness or bereavement.
- Family holidays or visits abroad during term time may only be authorised by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. Students are entitled to 13 weeks of holiday per year and should, therefore, avoid missing school time whenever possible. In unavoidable situations where a student needs to be absent during term time, parents/guardians must submit a request to the Headteacher **at least six weeks in advance** (or as soon as possible) to seek permission. Such absences will be limited to **a maximum of 3 days** and will be granted at the Headteacher's discretion. Permission will not always be given, except in exceptional circumstances. To minimise the impact on the student's learning and progress, the student should also arrange with their teachers to complete any missed work.
- The school authorises a student's absence for reasons other than those stated above. This could include visits, work experience, residential trips, bereavement or other life crises. It is vital that families inform school of any difficult circumstances for a student that may lead to absence. It is the decision of the school as to whether an explanation for an absence is satisfactory or not.

Attendance Concerns:

A student's attendance record may be identified as a cause for concern if:

- Absence on a particular day of the week is repeated on a regular basis.
- Several days of absence due to medical appointments.
- Student fails to return to school at the end of an 'authorised' leave of absence.
- Student goes on holiday without gaining school permission.
- Student regularly arrives late to school.
- Student's attendance falls below 95%.

For any of the above circumstances, the parents may be invited to a meeting with a member of the SLT and/or Head teacher to discuss the matter. Following the meeting, significant improvements in the child's attendance record will be expected to be made and this will be monitored by the attendance officer.

If the student's attendance remains a cause for concern, then the school may initiate intervention procedures. This is at the Head Teachers discretion.

The school will work in partnership with external support agencies by providing relevant information, in accordance with current data protection regulations, to support families where there are serious concerns regarding attendance.

Truancy

Truancy from school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will also warrant a sanction of a serious nature (see 'Behaviour & Discipline Policy'). Truancy includes a student failing to attend a lesson without the prior permission of the teacher or if a student leaves the school site at any point of the school day without prior authorisation from the school.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment will be carried out for any student who returns to school after a prolonged period of absence due to ill health.

Infectious Illnesses

All cases of infectious illness in the home should be reported to the school immediately by telephone to allow school to make a decision on whether to inform other parents of the risk, should there be more than three cases in school. If a student has been absent with an infectious illness, parents should send in a medical certificate on his return. This should state the nature of the illness and it should certify that the student is free from the infection.

Attendance Reward System

The school recognises and rewards good attendance. The attendance rewards form part of the whole school rewards system where good attendance and punctuality are rewarded at regular intervals.

Students maintaining 100% attendance/punctuality are recognised in an assembly at the end of each term and house points are allocated for them.

Consequences for Poor Attendance

The Legal Consequences of Non-Attendance

Legal proceedings and Penalty Notices have been introduced to try and ensure the regular attendance of children in education, this is in line with Birmingham City Council's 'Fast Track' Legal Proceedings. Legal proceedings will be considered after the school have tried to engage with, and offer support to, a family of a student who has attendance issues.

If the poor/non-attendance of a student is not resolved the school may decide to take legal action against the parents or responsible adult of the child. If found guilty by a Magistrate a parent/responsible adult could be fined up to £2,500, or a Parenting Order could be issued, which lasts for up to a year.

Legal Proceedings Criteria:

- Concerning levels of absence either authorised or unauthorised – (once a year schools should send the ‘School Attendance’ whole school letter to parents by pupil post, email, or by placing it on their website/in their prospectus)
- The pupil has at least one session of unauthorised absence - Early Help has been refused (this includes ‘no response’ to attempts by the school to engage the family); the circumstances of the family do not meet the threshold for Early Help/Social Care support; Early Help/Social Care strategies have not resulted in sustained attendance improvement
- The pupil has further unauthorised absence adding up to at least 10 sessions in total over the previous 12 calendar months
- The pupil has a minimum of 10 further sessions of unauthorised absence within 12 school weeks of the warning notice being issued
- Penalty Notices

The school can seek support from the Education Legal Intervention Team for parents who are not actively trying to support/improve their child’s attendance. The FAST-TRACK procedure will be initiated and followed with the hope that attendance will improve. Failure to see any improvements could result in fixed penalty notices being issued.

Intervention

DUIHS takes its attendance and punctuality seriously. The school recognises the negative impact of poor punctuality and attendance on a child’s wellbeing, behaviour and progress. As such the following sanction will be strongly enforced:

1st late – a parent notification by text or phone call

2nd late – a 1nd warning and a corresponding 20-minute detention

3rd late – a 2nd warning, a corresponding detention and a meeting with the headteacher, involving parents

4th and consistent late thereafter—further meeting with parents will be arranged to discuss school admission terms and conditions.

1st unauthorised absence – 1st letter will be sent to emphasise the important of attendance

2nd unauthorised absence – a 2nd warning letter to be sent

3rd unauthorised absence – a 3rd warning, meeting with the headteacher, involving parents

4th and consistent absences thereafter – further meeting with parents will be arranged to discuss school admission terms and conditions.

It is to be noted that where lateness and poor attendance correlates with poor safeguarding at home, relevant authorities will be contacted with relevant urgency.

We are frequently asked to comment on punctuality for employment, Further Education and Higher Education references – a record of poor punctuality may affect this.

Application for Leave of Absence Due to Exceptional Circumstances

The school does not normally authorise absence for holidays in term-time and strongly discourages parents from making such requests.

Leaves of absence will not be authorised if:

- ...the pupil's attendance is below than 95%
- ...they are pupils in years 10 and 11
- ...students are in examination periods – these are shown in the school calendar issued in September
- ...it is during period of year 10 work experience

Actions to be taken for pupils whom attendance is a cause for concern

- Absence on a certain day on a regular basis - Attendance Officer who will send a letter to parents to discuss their concern.
- Too many absences on a certain day due to medical appointments - Attendance Officer who will send a letter to parents to discuss their concern.
- Pupils who fail to return to school at the end of an authorised leave of absence – meeting with a member of the SLT/Head will be arranged. The stages outlined in section 'Following Up Absences', will be taken.
- Pupils who go on holiday without gaining school permission:
 - recorded as 'G' in registers
 - Parents are contacted by Attendance Officer
- Pupils regularly attend school after registration is closed: pupils/parents should be reminded that punctuality is important and that attending once registration has been completed is marked as an unauthorised absence – pupils/parents reminded that this can affect their child's sixth form applications.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% the parents are called in for a meeting with the Attendance Officer/member of SLT/Head
- If a pupil's attendance does not improve once the parents have been brought in, the parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the school.
- Any pupil who reaches 5 unauthorised absences may be removed from school roll
- Any pupil who is consistently missing lessons may be removed from school roll

Leave of Absence request

Each application is considered individually and is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

When requesting a leave of absence, parents must complete an '**Application for Leave of Absence**' form (available from the school office) and submit it to the Attendance Officer. The following conditions apply:

- All sections of the form must be completed before submission.
- The form must be received at least 6 weeks before the date of leave.
- The form must be submitted to the Attendance Officer before any bookings are made.

Parents should be aware that a leave of absence may not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- If a student's attendance record is concerning,
- If the leave is requested close to or during the school's internal assessment periods or external examination period,
- If the leave is requested during Work Experience,

- If the school is not satisfied that the reasons provided by the parent justify the leave.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head Teacher will determine the number of days the student can be absent. A return date will be agreed upon and specified on the application form.

If the student fails to return on the agreed date, the following will occur:

- Any days beyond the authorized leave will be recorded as unauthorised, and the procedures outlined in the **'Following Up Absences'** section will be followed.
- Parents will be contacted on the first day of the unauthorised absence, as explained in the **'Reporting an Absence - First Day Contact'** section.

In the case of a flight delay or cancellation, parents must provide valid evidence of this on the first day their child returns to school.

The school cannot approve leave of absence retrospectively. If parents fail to apply for leave in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The school reserves the right to remove a student's name from the attendance register if there is an unauthorised absence of three or more days beyond the agreed return date. In such cases, parents will be expected to pay a term's fee from the first day of the unauthorised absence.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
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/	Present (AM)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (PM)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Pupil has a Medical/Dental appointment
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code)	Unauthorised absence
S	Study leaves	Authorised absence
#	School closed to pupils (planned closure)	Not counted in possible attendances
CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
AUTHORISED ABSENCE		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Pupil has a Medical/Dental appointment

Appendix 2: Application Leave of Absence

Darul Uloom Islamic High School

Application for leave

Date: ____/____/____

Name of student: _____

School Year: _____ Madrasah Class: _____

We strongly advise you not to take any holidays during school working days unless unavoidable as this will affect your child's education.

Please state how long you wish to take your child out for:

From: ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____, Total days: _____

Please state the reason why you need to take your child out of the school:

I _____, the parent/ Guardian of _____

acknowledge that I am responsible my child's education during his absence from the School/ Madrasah and I am liable to pay for the School's fees for the duration of my child's absence. My child's name will be taken off from the register, if he fails to attend the School after approved holiday period.

Signature of parent/Guardian: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Student Attendance: _____ %	Permission granted: <input type="checkbox"/>	Permission refused: <input type="checkbox"/>
Comment: _____ _____ _____		
Signed by: _____ Signature: _____		
Date: ____/____/____		